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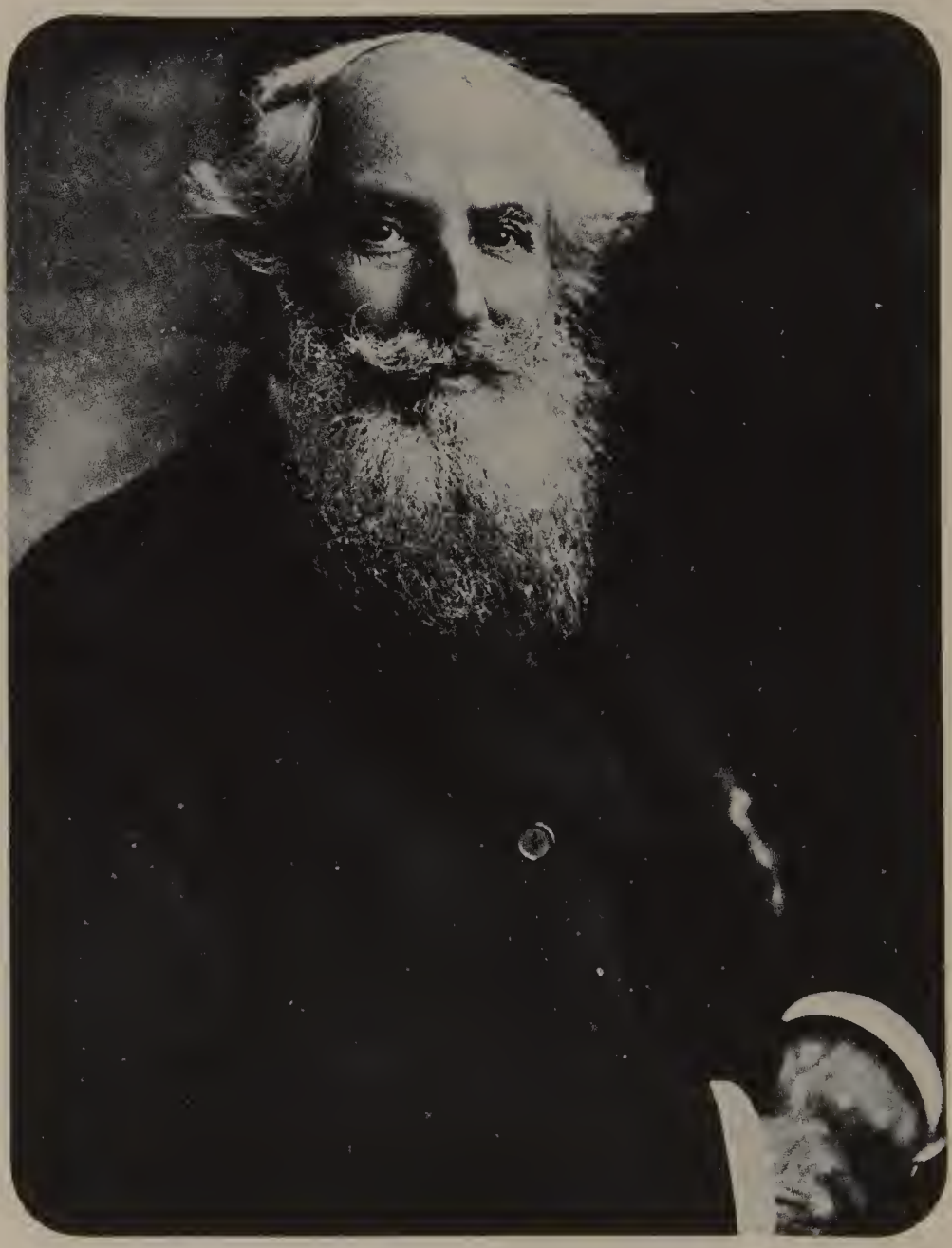

Frederick James Furnivall

1825-1910

From John Munro, *Dr. Furnivall: A Personal Record.* London, 1911.

# Dr. F. J. Furnivall

## *Victorian Scholar Adventurer*

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William Benzie

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To my Mother and to my Aunt Morley

# Contents


page

Preface . . . . . xi

1. Introduction . . . . . 3

2. *Life and Career* . . . . . 9

3. *Christian Socialist and Educator at the London Working Men's College* . . . . . 41

4. *Philologist and Lexicographer* . . . . . 71
   The London Philological Society
   *The New English Dictionary*

5. *Founder of Literary Societies—(Early Period)* . . . . . 117
   The Early English Text Society (1864)
   The Ballad Society and the Chaucer Society (1868)

6. *Founder of Literary Societies—(Later Period)* . . . . . 179
   The New Shakspere Society (1873)
   The Browning Society (1881), the Shelley Society (1886), and the Wyclif Society (1881).

7. Conclusion . . . . . 257

Chronological Table . . . . . 277

Bibliography . . . . . 279

Index . . . . . 293

# Illustrations


| | |
|---|---|
| Frederick James Furnivall, 1825-1910 | Frontispiece |
| Furnivall's wedding picture | Following page 116 |
| Furnivall portrait—young | |
| Furnivall portrait-middle-aged | |
| Furnivall at the Furnivall Sculling Club | |
| The club eight coxed by Furnivall (1907) | |
| Furnivall on Canbury Island | |
| Furnivall portrait | |
| Sir James Murray | |
| Walter Skeat | |
| Henry Bradshaw | |
| John Ruskin | |

# Preface

THIS CRITICAL biography of Frederick James Furnivall examines and evaluates his work as a pioneer of nineteenth-century English scholarship and looks at those aspects of his life, character, and milieu that contributed to his achievement. Charting the course of Furnivall's busy career was fraught with difficulties, not the least of which was preventing his enormous contribution to the development of English studies from being overshadowed by details of his controversial personality and private peccadilloes. My intention throughout has been to allow Furnivall to emerge not as merely another Victorian eccentric but as one of the great founders of modern English scholarship.

I am indebted to R. C. Alston, of the British Library, who suggested the subject to me, and to A. S. G. Edwards, of Victoria University, British Columbia, who read the book in manuscript and made valuable suggestions. I also want to thank W. S. Peterson, of the University of Maryland; K. M. Elisabeth Murray, author of *Caught in the Web of Words*; Mrs. J. Gordon and Mrs. R. Davies, Furnivall's granddaughters; and D. Muspratt, of the London Working Men's College, for their help and encouragement. Most of the research was done at the British Library, the Huntington Library, and the King's College Library, University of London, and the project was made possible by research and travel grants from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, Ottawa, and the University of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada.

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Dr. F. J. Furnivall

CHAPTER 1

# Introduction

THE ACADEMIC study of English as it is now pursued in schools, colleges, and universities has developed within only the last one hundred years. The Oxford English School, for instance, was not founded until 1893, and a chair of English language and literature was established at Cambridge only as recently as 1911.[1] During much of the Victorian period, while Cambridge dons squabbled about the respectability of English studies and Oxford tangled with John Churton Collins, the fierce advocate of an English school there, the serious business of advancing and promoting English scholarship was in the hands of foreign scholars abroad, and private or professional scholars at home, working outside the university walls. During the many discussions that eventually led to the creation of the English Tripos at Cambridge in 1917, A.W. Ward complained that English studies were more advanced in the United States, Germany, and France than at Cambridge.[2] In England the important business of unearthing and annotating English texts, founding literary societies, and establishing extension lectures in English language and literature was left to nonprofessional enthusiasts—called "privateers" by W. P. Ker—and to

[1]See C. H. Firth, *The School of English Language and Literature*; E. M. W. Tillyard *The Muse Unchained*; Stephen Potter, *The Muse in Chains*; John Churton Collins, *The Study of English Literature*.

[2]Tillyard, *The Muse Unchained*, p. 37.

enterprising professionals like Churton Collins and James Stuart, of Cambridge, operating independently of the universities.[3]

One such "privateer" who made a unique contribution to the advancement of English studies in the nineteenth century was Frederick James Furnivall (1825-1910), a Cambridge graduate in mathematics and science, and a man of strong individuality and remarkable versatility. John Gross's description of him, "one of the great rock-blasting entrepreneurs of Victorian scholarship, the kind of man who if his energies had taken another turn might have covered a continent with railways,"[4] highlights the salient features of Furnivall's character: tenacity, industry, vigorous enthusiasm, and supreme confidence.

In his book *The Scholar Adventurers,* Richard Altick sees Furnivall and American scholar George Lyman Kittredge as excellent examples of nineteenth-century "characters."[5] Unlike Kittredge, Furnivall did not dip his beard in laundry bluing, but almost any day of the week he could be found sculling on the Thames with shopgirls, his long white whiskers streaming out behind him, poring over dusty manuscripts at the British Museum, or holding court with an assortment of international scholars and working men students at an A.B.C. teashop in New Oxford Street. Like most other "characters," Furnivall had many sides to him. There was the kind, selfless, patriotic humanitarian, tireless in his efforts as a Christian Socialist in the London Working Men's College to bring about social reform and promote democratic fellowship and moral enlightenment among all English men and women. There was the dedicated literary detective collating, annotating, transcribing, deciphering, and editing so that all Englishmen might read the literature of their noble forefathers and learn of their glorious social history. There was also the volatile, impulsive, meddling, cantankerous literary warmonger, crude and unguarded in speech and action when criticized or crossed. There was the undiplomatic, unconventional individualist in corduroy trousers and pink-ribbon tie among the sober, frock-coated members of the

[3]For further examples, see H. R. Steeves, *Learned Societies and English Literary Scholarship,* pp. 98ff.

[4]John Gross, *The Rise and Fall of the Man of Letters*, p. 169.

[5]George Altick, *The Scholar Adventurers*, p. 4.

London Philological Society, and the jaunty, roguish after-dinner speaker who made the Victorian Establishment squirm with his speeches on topics ranging from women's suffrage to the beauties of Wycliffe and Chaucer. John Munro's *Frederick James Furnivall: A Volume of Personal Record,* for all its Victorian sentimentality, provides a fascinating account of F. J. Furnivall the man and the scholar.[6] It contains the tributes of forty-nine persons from Britain and abroad who knew him and worked with him. They include continental scholars Alois Brandl, Ewald Flügel, J. J. Jusserand, and Cino Chiarini; philologists Walter W. Skeat, Sir James Murray, and Henry Bradley; novelists Beatrice Harraden, Anthony Hope, and Richard Whiteing; leading scholars W. P. Ker, Stopford Brooke, Caroline Spurgeon, Edward Dowden, and A.W. Pollard; and an A.B.C. teashop waitress, Blanche Huckle. In his tribute to Furnivall, Ker writes:

> His work as a student was another example of what is fortunately not rare in England, the pursuit and diffusion of knowledge, apart from any elaborate organisation of research. Much of the best historical work in England has been done by unprofessional hands, and Furnivall worked as an independent adventurer. No doubt his work had many of the faults which are prevented in the best regulated schools, but it had always the spring and energy of a life unimpeded by routine.[7]

Certainly Furnivall was no highly trained academic scholar of English. By profession he was a solicitor, although considering that among many other activities he taught English at the London Working Men's College, worked on the *New English Dictionary,* founded the Early English Text Society and six literary societies, and published more than one hundred editions of English texts, it is hard to believe that much conveyancing was done at his office in Old Square between 1856 and 1873.[8] Generally speaking, for the first thirty years of Furnivall's career, from 1848 to 1879, his energies were concentrated on Christian Socialist activities at the Working Men's

[6]John Munro, *Frederick James Furnivall: A Volume of Personal Record.*

[7]Ibid, p. 94.

[8]Furnivall's London law office was at 11 New Square from 1850 to 1855, at 6 Old Square from 1856 to 1858, and at 3 Old Square from 1859 to 1872. He gave up practice in 1873.

College and on the vast dictionary project for the London Philological Society. During the second period, spanning almost fifty years from 1864 to 1910, he was principally involved in the work of his various literary societies: the Early English Text Society (founded in 1864), the Ballad Society and the Chaucer Society (1868), the New Shakspere Society (1873), the Browning Society and the Wyclif Society (1881), and the Shelley Society (1886).

Furnivall was friendly with many notable men of his day, among them John Ruskin, Thomas Carlyle, Robert Browning, Alfred, Lord Tennyson, Charles Kingsley, and Frederick D. Maurice. Such literary connections were invaluable to Furnivall, who had a rare talent for securing the help and cooperation of both distinguished and unknown Victorians for his various literary projects. A.W. Pollard writes:

> . . . his vitality was so abounding that not merely his enthusiasm but his ideals became infectious, and when he took hold of a man and told him to do a thing he put him on his mettle. . . . Furnivall was always putting men and women on their mettle in this way, . . . and spurring them to put the best work they could into tasks which without his encouragement they would never have dared to attempt.[9]

Because of the neglect of English studies in the universities, textual criticism was not well developed, and finding editors frequently posed a serious problem even for the redoubtable Furnivall. Many editors and helpers were cajoled or dragooned by him into accepting assignments, and, once caught, they found Furnivall a hard taskmaster. It was this principle of cooperation and this method of coercion that he was to use throughout his long literary career: the dynamic organization of unpaid service by persons brought together by a common cause, the promotion of English studies.[10]

Yet it was neither a natural flair for organization nor a passion for philology that was the guiding principle of Furnivall's long, eventful life. Like his Christian Socialist colleagues in the London Working Men's College, Furnivall came to believe that the solution to the plight of the Victorian working classes lay in a liberal education.

[9]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. 148.

[10]See K. M. Elisabeth Murray, *Caught in the Web of Words*, p. 93.

Among other things such an education would stress social reconstruction and enrichment of personality through the study of English literature, which he saw as the best means of establishing connections with England's national heritage and contact with the great minds of the past. A fierce patriot, Furnivall held high hopes for the future of English men and women, and he was convinced that that future could be assured only through human fellowship, individual freedom and equality, and a knowledge of the customs and manners of their great forefathers. It was this deeply felt humanitarian and sociological ideal that was to be the real driving force behind all his many schemes and projects for over half a century.

It was not a theoretical, narrowly conceived ideal. He taught working men the beauties of Chaucer and *Piers Plowman* and founded his literary societies for the discussion and publication of English texts, his purpose always being to illustrate to Victorians the glories of England's social history. When replying at the end of his career to Wilhelm Wetz's tribute to his life's work for philology, he said to Roman Dyboski: "I never cared a bit for philology; my chief aim has been throughout to illustrate the social condition of the English people in the past."[11] Like many other educated Victorians, Furnivall had a great belief in the evolutionary process in history and in "the progress of man towards higher and nobler developments." It was this belief that led him to revere England's past and look forward with optimism to its splendid future. His ambition was to reveal to his contemporaries troubled by the problems and anxieties of the Victorian age the best from the past and to bequeath to future generations of Englishmen a rich literary and cultural legacy.

This book will examine Furnivall's legacy: the contribution he made to the development of English studies and the light that his crowded, fascinating career sheds on Victorian culture and mentality.

[11]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. 43.

CHAPTER 2

# Life and Career

FREDERICK JAMES Furnivall was born in Egham, Surrey, on February 4, 1825. His father, George Furnivall, was a very pious, strong-minded physician with a successful local medical practice. Dr. Furnivall had given up an army career at his mother's request, but regretted leaving the Fourteenth Foot Regiment. To young Furnivall's astonished question, "But why did you [leave] then?" his Victorian father replied, "In those days children obeyed their parents."[1] George Furnivall had no financial regrets, because his Egham practice flourished, and a private lunatic asylum called Great Foster House, which he had established at the family home, yielded a fortune of about £200,000 at his death in 1865. Such commercial exploitation probably did not stir the evangelical conscience of Dr. Furnivall. As Richard Altick points out, "It is a cliché of Victorian history that the weekday businessman was the Sunday Evangelical. The eye that was fixed on the profit-and-loss ledger six days a week shifted to a hopeful contemplation of the heavenly account on the seventh."[2]

Furnivall's boyhood was spent roaming happily in the Surrey countryside at Egham, Marlow, and Windsor. He began school in 1831 at Englefield Green and then went to Turnham Green and later Hanwell—all private schools. At Hanwell, where he started classes in

[1]John Munro, *Frederick James Furnivall: A Volume of Personal Record*, p. viii. The details of Munro's biography were checked by Furnivall. Ibid., p. 43.

[2]Richard D. Altick, *Victorian People and Ideas*, p. 168.

1839 at the age of fourteen, he was "particularly brilliant at languages, science, divinity and dancing,"[3] but found relief from his studies in parties, dances, visits to the opera, leapfrog, marbles, and fly-the-garter, just as later in life he took time off from his manuscripts and meetings to have tea and sing songs with the young members of his Furnivall Rowing Club.

Furnivall's earliest surviving diaries, from which Munro has drawn some of his information about this period, reveal much about Furnivall's school days and adolescence and provide glimpses of the gradual development of the future scholar adventurer. Day-to-day events are meticulously recorded hour by hour. For example, part of the entry for March 20, 1840, reads: "1/2 6 to 8 Rose, Washed. Divinity and German; 8 to 9 Breakfast and Family Prayers . . . 5 to 6 Drawing a woman's head; 6 to 7 Tea and Family Prayers . . . 8 to 9 Diary, learn verses, said prayers. 5th line of the Whites in the Charagraph."[4] What is particularly prominent in the entries for this period is the extreme piety of his life. An excerpt from the entry for March 29, 1840, reads: "1/2 6 to 8 Divinity . . . 9 to 10 Recreation and Prayers; 10 to 11 Went to church; 11 to 12 Read Prayers . . . 2 to 3 Went to church; 3 to 4 read prayers . . . 8 to 9 Family Prayers, said prayers and to bed."

In 1841, Furnivall, at the age of sixteen, left Hanwęll for University College, London, where he studied German, chemistry, botany, mathematics, Greek, history, and natural philosophy. His habit as a student in London of reading the Bible closely, criticizing the church sermons he listened to every Sunday, and recording in his "sermon book" all the homilies he heard delivered also reflects his strict evangelical upbringing.[5] During the period he was studying at University College (1841–42) there are signs that his private

[3]*Hanwell Collegiate School: List of Classes for Christmas and Midsummer, 1839.* Munro wrongly gives the date as 1840.

[4]The last item is a reference to a behavior chart at Hanwell on which good boys were entered in white, bad boys in red, and the rest in blue. Much of the information about Furnivall's school days and student life has been obtained from his unpublished diaries, now in the possession of his two granddaughters. The diaries cover the periods March 20–May 21, 1840; October 9, 1841–August 17, 1842; August 19, 1842–March 9, 1843; March 10–October 14, 1843; October 20, 1843–January 14, 1844; 1848; 1851.

[5]Munro, *Furnivall*, pp. ix–x.

reading was broadening. He read *Robin Hood, Tales of Chivalry,* Shakespeare, Milton, Dickens, and Thomas Keightley's *History of England,* as well as sermons and the Bible. For April 13, 1842, Furnivall has entered in his diary: "Attended Prof. Creasy's lecture 'On the Personal Influence of the Lives of Great Men on the Fate of Nations,' the lecture was *very eloquent,* & given in the Botanical Theatre." Also, his early interest in men and their affairs is seen in his practice of keeping one book for anecdotes and another for "remarks on friends." According to Munro, Furnivall "frequently plunged in political and theological arguments, and gained that interest in social history and humanity which he carried to Cambridge."[6] A random extract from his diary (for Friday, May 13, 1842) shows some of Furnivall's London habits and also the fondness for recording small details that is so prominent later in his literary work:

> (A Party) Had some ices; danced; had supper at 1/2 past 1; danced a country dance, etc.; took a cab to Walshe's [where he lived] at 1/2 past 3; read, etc., went to bed. Got up at 20m to 8; had breakfast; attended Prof. De Morgan's lecture on Mathematics till 20m past 10; wrote in my Sermon book for an hour; put some plants into my book of Botanical Specimens; attended Prof. Malden's lecture on Greek till 20m to 2; arranged my plants: had dinner; . . . attended Prof. Potter's lecture on Natural Philosophy till 5, and Dr. Lindlay's examination on Botany till 1/4 to 6; . . . took a cab at 20m past 9 to Mr. Grahame's; had some coffee; danced, had ices; quadrilled and waltzed; had supper: fine day.[7]

Despite his exciting student life in London in 1841 and 1842, which brought him into contact with many different kinds of people who exposed him to new ideas and attitudes, Furnivall was still deeply attached to the family home at Egham. He wrote many letters to his parents and visited them frequently. During the summer months he spent at Egham, he amused himself rowing, bathing, fishing, riding, and visiting friends in the neighborhood. He taught Sunday School, helped with the haymaking, and sometimes tutored his brothers, Charles, Edward, William, and Henry. He used to gaze with admiration when the Duke of Wellington, "bolt upright on his seat," drove

[6]Ibid., p. x.

[7]Ibid., pp. x–xi.

through Egham in his chaise, and all the Furnivall boys liked to watch Prince Albert and his party shooting. On Monday, December 27, 1841, Furnivall wrote in his diary: "Saw Prince Albert & his party, rabbit shooting for an hour, they killed 86 rabbits, 3 hares & 1 bird." And on Monday, June 13, 1842, he wrote:

> At Windsor . . . saw the Etonians present an address to the Queen. Saw the Queen & Prince Albert (looking very well) start for Slough to go to town by the railroad, the first time that the Queen had ever been by it; the Eton boys ran all the way to the College, round the Queen's carriage hurrahing her.

Back in London before the end of the summer of 1842, Furnivall studied under a tutor from Trinity Hall, Cambridge, and in his time off he added boxing to his favorite sports. He also rode the "corncake," which had just been invented. Furnivall described the carriage as follows: "Mr. Wollaston took their Corncake up to the Park, a 4-wheeled carriage for 1 person, turned by treddles, worked by the legs; it takes its name from the machinery making a noise like the bird corncake; I had a turn in it, and liked it very much."[8]

On October 19, 1842, Furnivall left Egham for London once again, "by the 7.45 A.M. omnibus," but this time he was on his way to study at Cambridge, with fifty pounds in his pocket from his father. Those were the days before the railways were fully developed, and he took the Fly Coach from the George and Blue Boar in Holborn at 11:15 A.M., arriving in Cambridge at 6:15 P.M.

Student days at Trinity Hall were happy and profitable, but he was more interested in rowing, walking, and sprinting than anything else. He won his place in the college eight in 1845, and he invented outriggers for his sculling boat, an innovation that enabled Bob Newell to beat John Clasper for the first time in January, 1846. On one occasion he bribed the waterman half a crown to name a new "funny" (a narrow racing boat, used with a pair of sculls), after his favorite sister, Selina.[9]

During this period Furnivall remained extremely devout and rarely missed church. At Trinity Hall he founded a branch of the Church

[8]Ibid., p. xii.

[9]Ibid., p. xiii. Furnivall had four sisters: Mary, Selina, Fanny, and Louisa. Most of his extant family letters are addressed to Selina.

Missionary Society, and in May, 1843, "when a certain Syrian, Assaad Kayat, addressed the men, he undertook to collect £1 per annum for three years towards educating a Syrian 'Petrargi' at Cambridge."[10] Yet while he continued to read his sermons, "Gawen the Reformer" (mentioned frequently in the diaries), and the Bible, Furnivall was also reading novels (for example, *Martin Chuzzlewit*), Connop Thirwall's *History of Rome* (1828), John Lemprière's *Classical Dictionary,* and *The Dictionary of Arts and Sciences.* Furnivall's interest in literature was being developed by Daniel Macmillan, the bookseller and publisher. When the enthusiastic young Furnivall appealed to his father for "a few thousand pounds to go into partnership with the Macmillans instead of the Bar," his request was immediately turned down.[11] It was at this time too that Furnivall became a vegetarian and remained one for twenty-five years. He was a teetotaler and non-smoker throughout his life. Such abstinence, a result of his evangelical background and his passion for sport and physical fitness, singled him out at Trinity Hall. Munro records: "The few more riotous students sometimes intruded on him. Three of them, after a midnight carousal, once burst in his door; and one of these, disguised as a ghost, entered his room at 4 A.M., and was unmercifully bolstered out of it for his trouble."[12]

Furnivall took his B.A. in 1846 and his M.A. in 1849 (after he returned to London), but throughout this period, on account of his willful pursuit of sports, he received constant admonishments from his authoritarian father. Dr. Furnivall's letters from Egham provided solemn advice on religion and morality. After an outburst on Puseyism (Edward Pusey was a leader of the Oxford Movement), and popery, he wrote:

> *Finis coronat opus.* Let no Persuasion, Sophistry, Vice, Example, or Folly turn you from the right Path. Be prudent; be industrious; strictly attentive to your Duty to God, your fellow creatures and yourself. Let not the riper Years upbraid the green. . . . Remember that to whom much is given from him much is expected.[13]

[10]Ibid., p. xiii.

[11]See *Academy* 22 (August, 1882):112.

[12]Munro, *Furnivall*, pp. xiii–xiv.

[13]Ibid., p. xiv.

Despite the severity of such counsel, Furnivall apparently got along well with his father. When he was at home, he worked in the doctor's dispensary and on his small farm, as well as frequently visiting Dr. Furnivall's friends. It was in the chambers of one of those friends, Bellenden Ker, the conveyancer, that Furnivall began his law studies, after being "entered at Lincoln's Inn" on January 26, 1846. He was called to the bar at Gray's Inn in January, 1849. One of his fellow pupils at Ker's was John Malcolm Ludlow, the brilliant Socialist, who soon became Furnivall's idol and began to exert a powerful influence on him, especially with regard to social problems and support for the poor. At that time Furnivall was still a Tory and a "shy Evangelical." It was only later, according to N. C. Masterman, "when defying his colleagues, he grew a beard that his personality also appeared suddenly to become transformed, and he developed some of the characteristics which the critics of democracy declared it would inevitably bring in its train."[14] The beard, like the pink-ribbon tie, no doubt indicated a free, independent spirit at work and a desire to sever political links with his hardline Tory father.

Signs of the change in Furnivall's political beliefs are scattered through his only surviving diaries for this period (1848 and 1851). He visits Ludlow frequently, he meets Harriet Martineau, and in 1848 he joins the radical Whittington Club, whose purpose was "to bring the advantages of club life out of the West End and extend them to the lower middle class clerks and shop assistants east of Charing Cross."[15] At the Whittington, where women were admitted as full members, Furnivall met active young Socialists, as well as Owenites like Lloyd Jones and G. J. Holyoake; listened to prominent lecturers, including Charles Cowden Clarke and Passmore Edwards; and got a taste of the club camaraderie that he was later to help develop in the Working Men's College and in his own literary societies.

The diaries also show the direction that Furnivall's other interests were taking. On Sunday, August 13, 1848, he "heard Dr. Wordsworth at Westminster Abbey at 3 P.M. Unpleasant manner, but poetry good stuff." He has also noted that he had "heard [Alexander

[14]N. C. Masterman, *John Malcolm Ludlow: The Builder of Christian Socialism*, p. 80.

[15]Christopher Kent, "The Whittington Club: A Bohemian Experiment in Middle Class Social Reform," *Victorian Studies* 18 (September, 1974):31.

John] Scott."[16] On Friday, August 18, 1848, he "took Selina to Mr. Haweises. Talked about bees, reason & understanding. 'Vestiges of Creation' bosh. H. likes Lowell's answer. Daniell denied the Chemistry of it."[17] Jenny Lind's concerts were a great attraction for Furnivall: "Jenny Lind in 'la Sonnambula'—house crammed" is only one of many references to his concert visits.

The diaries also indicate that his reading continued to become more and more liberal. The Book of Genesis is significantly very prominent, but otherwise the books he lists are on literature or politics. Shakespeare, Carlyle, Shelley, and Keats are mentioned, but Tennyson and Ruskin were obviously his favorites. On Saturday, January 4, 1851, Furnivall was reading *Modern Painters* and the *Edinburgh Review,* and in March of that year he had little sleep for several nights because he was struggling through *The Stones of Venice.* On Wednesday, March 19, he read *In Memoriam;* on Monday, June 2, 1851, he "read J. S. Mill, Tennyson & *The Bible* as usual till 1.30 (A.M.)"; on Monday, July 7, 1851, he "copied Tennyson till 1 [A.M.]"; and on Friday, August 22, 1851, he "read King Arthur till 2.15" in the morning.

Furnivall's political leanings are clearly reflected in the titles he has recorded in his diary. On Wednesday, January 22, 1851, he "read Mill's Political Economy." He also read "Mrs. Gaskell's stories & Mrs. Napier on Woman's Rights." On Monday, February 10, 1851, he "read Mary Barton," and on Thursday, February 20, 1851, "Hole's Social Science" followed by *Yeast* on Saturday, March 22, 1851.

Apart from Ludlow's immense influence and Furnivall's ever-growing interest in contemporary social problems,[18] events like the

[16]Alexander John Scott (1805-66) obtained the chair of English language and literature in University College, London, in November, 1848. In 1851 he was appointed principal of Owen's College, Manchester.

[17]Hugh R. Haweis (1838-1901), a celebrated Broad Churchman, was born at Egham. Furnivall also discussed biblical criticism with Arthur P. Stanley (1815-81), historian and cleric. Stanley was "Arthur," the idol of the school in *Tom Brown's School Days* and known as the "heretic dean." See R. E. Prothero and G. G. Bradley, *The Life and Correspondence of A. P. Stanley*; John Frederic Daniell, *Introduction to the Study of Chemical Philosophy.*

[18]According to Munro, "Furnivall may also have been greatly influenced by a sermon which he heard preached by Sir William Dumbarton on behalf of the District Visiting Society at Percy Chapel on December 19, 1841." Munro, *Furnivall,* p. xviii.

1840 Chartist upheavals, the Corn Law agitation, the Hungry Forties, and the revolution in France brought home to him and other bright men of his generation the sufferings of the poor classes. He had firsthand experience of the Chartist upheavals, since he was enlisted as a "special" constable. In the February, 1906, issue of *Notes and Queries* he writes: "Surely there must be many of us alive who were sworn in as specials in 1848 to quell the supposed Chartist riots, which did not take place and were never intended. I was one of the Lincoln's lot, and am now over eighty one."[19]

After the collapse of the Chartist movement Furnivall joined a group of intelligent young university and professional people who banded together to try to put right political and social wrongs in England and to unite different social classes in the pursuit of higher spiritual ideals. They called themselves Christian Socialists and took as their leader John Frederick Denison Maurice, professor of English literature, history, and theology in King's College, London, and the "prophet" of the Christian Socialist movement. Maurice's chief supporters at the start included Ludlow, a "scholarly barrister" and the "intellectual power" of the movement;[20] Charles Kingsley, parson and novelist; Charles Mansfield, the chemist; and Furnivall. They began at once to meet weekly to discuss plans and projects for the movement.[21]

The immediate result of these meetings was a call for house-to-house visits and the formation of Bible classes and working-men's cooperative associations. Munro writes:

> From happy days spent in the rural delights of Egham, the clean life of Cambridge, and the society of his own and his father's friends, Furnivall was initiated by Ludlow, in 1848, into a world where drink, disease, and hunger held their terrible sway. He began his district visiting with Ludlow, Turing. and others, and his work for sanitary reform and the problems of London labour claimed his attention.[22]

[19]*Notes and Queries*, 10th ser. 5 (February, 1906):156.

[20]Ludlow was educated in France, and also spent the summer of 1849 there.

[21]*London Working Men's College Magazine*, September, 1860, pp. 144-45. Much of the Christian Socialists' information came from Henry Mayhew's letters in the *Morning Chronicle* in 1849, which described the squalor of some of the sweated industries in London.

[22]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. xviii. The London Working Men's College was then in Great Ormond Street. *London Working Men's College Magazine*, September, 1860, pp. 144-45.

The failure of the cooperative associations[23] after a brief period of operation is not surprising, since neither the Christian Socialists nor their charges were educated or trained for the complex business of production, management, and salesmanship.[24] Maurice and the others naturally attributed the failure to the lack of moral training and education given to members of the working class. Many years later, in 1886, Tom Hughes (of *Tom Brown's Schooldays* fame) described the results with characteristic frankness: ". . . the squabbles and idlings and swindlings and incompetence of the workmen in the London Associations . . . convinced Mr. Maurice that they had to be educated before they would be capable of the self-restraint, staunchness, and obedience which are absolutely necessary in an association for production."[25]

The idea that the new industrial age had brought with it a new demand for a kind of education which would remedy the defects of working-class character conformed neatly with one of Maurice's pet theories: that a divine educational plan provided for the perfection of the individual and the human race. On this point Margaret Hodgen writes:

> On the whole, Christian Socialism was less a system of ideas than a warm, human impulse toward social improvement deriving its inspiration from University and Church. The early Christian Socialists, the young lawyers, architects, physicians, teachers and clergymen fresh from Oxford and Cambridge who joined the movement were in no sense heirs to working-class tradition. Intellectually they were debtors to Owen and the dissenting economists, Grey,

[23]*London Working Men's College Magazine*, September, 1860, p. 145. The idea of Association had been introduced long before in the form of Owenite villages of cooperation, but the Working Men's Co-operative Association was derived from Ludlow's study of *associations ouvrières* set up in Paris after the Revolution of 1848.

[24]About twelve associations of London tailors, shoemakers, builders, printers, bakers, needlewomen, and so on, were formed, but the first report of the council of The Society for Promoting Working Men's Associations, published in 1852, made it clear that this experiment in economic cooperation was not going to succeed. J. M. Ludlow and C. Sully, "The Society for Promoting Working Men's Associations," in *Tracts on Christian Socialism*, no. 5. Furnivall was involved principally in the Tailors' Co-operative Society. W. G. Collingwood, *Life of Ruskin*, p. 149.

[25]From a letter to Mr. Jennings, secretary of the college, quoted in J. F. C. Harrison, *A History of the Working Men's College, 1854-1954*, p. 15. This is the best history of the college. See also Frederick James Furnivall, *Early History of the Working Men's College*.

Hodgskin, Bray; spiritually they were the product of the Utopian ferment which had also produced Shelley, Wordsworth, Southey and Coleridge.[26]

In their desire, then, to destroy class prejudice and rivalry by deepening and extending the religious sense of brotherhood and by promoting higher standards of culture and conduct, the Christian Socialists did not for one moment consider that the downfall of the workshops meant that cooperation was a theoretical or practical impossibility. Rather, they began to think of its application to another field of endeavor. Maurice, for example, felt that in education the same principle of cooperation was already being used in a unique new way. "I was free to consider," he said, shortly after the collapse of the associations, "whether there was not another opening for the assertion of the principle of co-operation. . . . A college expresses to my mind . . . precisely the work we could undertake. . . . We could give hint of the way in which the professional and working classes might co-operate."[27] Thus, as the practical application of the idea of Associationism, the Working Men's College was born at what was a critical time in English social history. All the Christian Socialists were uncomfortably aware of the growing breach between the working and governing classes, and no doubt they also knew that, despite the efforts of adult schools and mechanics' institutes, the state of education in England was deplorable.[28] A letter from a Walter Cooper to Ludlow on September 2, 1850, which Furnivall copied out in his own handwriting, presumably for posterity, reads: ". . . thank you for Alton Locke. God Bless its Noble Author. . . . thousands of working men

[26]Margaret Hodgen, *Workers' Education in England and the United States*. Hodgen is quoting in part from R. A. Woods and A. J. Kennedy, *The Settlement Horizon*, p. 8.

[27]Hodgen, *Workers' Education*, p. 102. J. F. C. Harrison suggests that another reason for the new educational venture was the collapse of *Politics for the People*, a journal that had attracted many to the movement. He writes, "The Christian Socialists looked around for some form of practical activity as an outlet for their newly acquired enthusiasm and convictions." Harrison, *A History of the Working Men's College*, p. 10. Kingsley's novels *Yeast* and *Alton Locke* were inspired by his writing for *Politics and the People*, and the effect of these publications was to produce sympathy for the hardships of many working people.

[28]For example, in 1845, 33 percent of men and 49 percent of women were unable to write their names. Also, in Manchester in 1865, of 104,000 of school age, only about half that number, 55,000, attended school. The situation in other industrial cities was the same. Hodgen, *Workers' Education*, p. 102.

with throbing [sic] hearts and straining eyes are looking to Christian Socialism for help."[29] In reply to a letter from Furnivall about the chapter in *Political Economy* on "The Probable Futurity of the Labouring Classes," John Stuart Mill writes on February 13, 1854:

> I am glad that you think its circulation among the working people likely to be useful; and I am sure that whatever helps to make them connect their hopes with co-operation, and with the moral qualities necessary to make co-operation succeed, rather than with strikes to impose bad restrictions on employers, or simply to extort more money, will do for them what they are greatly in need of. I therefore so far as depends upon me, give my full consent and approbation to your public spirited project, but I should like first to make some little additions to the chapter, tending to increase its usefulness.[30]

Furnivall obviously pressed the matter, because the next letter from Mill is dated February 18, 1854, and reads: "I will take the chapter in hand without loss of time. You will I dare say allow me a few days to consider in what manner I can improve it."[31]

Mill was surprised by Furnivall's request because, as he told Harriet Taylor, "I did not expect the Christian Socialists would wish to circulate the chapter as it is in the 3d. edit[ion] since it stands up for Competition against their one-eyed attacks & denunciations of it." The chapter also supports cooperation, however, and refers to the Christian Socialists as a "band of friends, chiefly clergymen and barristers to whose noble exertions too much praise can scarcely be given."[32]

It was about this time that the jovial Tom Hughes was accepted into the group. According to Harrison, "With his hearty, athletic common-man approach he [Hughes] brought a new note of normalcy, valuable as an antidote to the crankiness of several of the other teachers, such as Furnivall and Mansfield with their personal oddities and vegetarian, non-smoking, teetotal habits."[33] Charles Mansfield's favorite subjects were vegetarianism and ornithology (his nom de

[29]Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 200.

[30]British Library, Add. MS 43798, fols. 57–58.

[31]Ibid., fol. 60.

[32]J. M. Robson, ed., *Mill: Principles of Political Economy*, 3:1033.

[33]Harrison, *A History of the Working Men's College*, p. 10.

plume was "Will Willow-Wren"), and Kingsley's wife, Fanny, found him not always acceptable at her dinner parties because he had a habit of turning up wearing cloth shoes and sporting "the beard which he wanted the other Christian Socialists to adopt as their distinguishing mark."[34] Furnivall knew Tom Hughes only slightly but opposed his admission to the college. "Oh, he won't do. A very good man for a cricket match, or as umpire at football, but no good for teaching,"[35] he declared.

When the London Working Men's College eventually opened in 1854, Furnivall characteristically threw himself into its activities with almost reckless enthusiasm and was soon devising energetic but often controversial schemes and projects designed to enlighten and regenerate his working-class students. Issues like Maurice's refusal to admit women to college classes or allow student excursions on the Sabbath led to acrimonious exchanges between the bouncy, lawless Furnivall and the straitlaced, authoritarian college principal. Nevertheless, Furnivall was to continue in his work as educational and social reformer for the next twenty years, teaching grammar and English literature, directing college social activities, and conducting his students on botanical and geological excursions, as well as organizing and participating in long hikes, rowing parties, cricket matches, and picnics.

Furnivall's Christian Socialist commitments were not his only concern during this earlier period of his career, which spans the years from about 1846 to 1860. His fascination for English continued to grow, and although his diaries after 1851 have not survived, it is rather clear that, apart from his own reading and eager curiosity, his preoccupation with English studies was being stimulated by the discussions of the literati he was mixing with in Christian Socialist circles and by the exciting work being done in the new scientific philology at University College, where he had studied Greek under Henry Malden in 1841 and 1842. Furnivall's membership in the London Philological Society in 1847, and his appointment as joint secretary with T. H. Key in 1853 put him in close touch with leading

[34]R. B. Martin, *The Dust of Combat*, p. 90.

[35]Ibid.

English philologists like Joseph Bosworth, Richard Garnet, Edwin Guest, and Hensleigh Wedgwood, and, of course, his obvious attachment to the society indicates the direction in which his literary interests were taking him.

Furnivall's gradual immersion in the literary world is also seen in some of his correspondence. The letters of William Johnson Cory are revealing in this respect.[36] Cory uses Furnivall as a kind of literary messenger and "go-between," and his constant demands and queries recall Furnivall's own later methods. In several letters written in 1848 and addressed to 44 Lincoln's Inn Fields, Cory commands Furnivall to get books for his boys at Eton ("Waddington's *History,* Forster's *Life of Goldsmith,* Macleane's *Sermons,* Motherwell's *Ballads*"),[37] and he also asks Furnivall whether Bohn or Parker will publish an inexpensive edition of poems that he has selected for use in schools. The poems "which I should wish my young people and others to have the pleasure of reading" were drawn from Tennyson, Coleridge, Keats, Shelley, and Burns.[38] Another letter, dated February 12, 1849, reads:

> If you have an opportunity please to ask Professor *Scott* (if you know him well enough)[39] or ask Wedgwood or Key what ought to be the method of teaching the English language. . . . if the English Etymology is to be taught methodically, what book is fit for the middle classes of a public school. . . . If *rhetoric* is to be taught is there anything better than Blair & Campbell?[40]

There is no reason to suppose that Furnivall objected to these literary commissions. On the contrary, there are already hints in his dealings with William Cory and others of his later habit of sending

[36]William Johnson Cory (1823–92) became assistant master at Eton in 1845 and remained there for twenty-five years. He was a voluminous writer of letters and journals and an ardent patriot and critic of his times. John Drinkwater, *A Book for Bookmen*, pp. 3–40. Timothy d'Arch Smith, *Love in Earnest*, pp. 4–11.

[37]George Waddington, *A History of the Church*; John Forster, *The Life and Adventures of Oliver Goldsmith*; Arthur John Macleane, *Sermons for Schools and Families*; William Motherwell, *Minstrelsy Ancient and Modern.*

[38]Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 210.

[39]A. J. Scott succeeded Latham and Tom Taylor as professor of English in University College in 1848. His favorite subject was Anglo-Saxon. H. Hale Bellot, *University College, London, 1826–1926*, p. 260.

[40]Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 217. See also MS FU 207, letter dated August 15, 1848.

people books, answering their queries, and dispatching pamphlets, notices, and periodicals to all and sundry. For instance, a letter from Tennyson, dated February 2, 1854, thanks Furnivall for having sent him a copy of the "Address to Maurice from Members of Lincoln's Inn,"[41] and on October 21, 1854, Harriet Martineau writes to thank Furnivall for "the great parcel of borrowed documents that you kindly obtained for me, for the purpose of my History."[42]

In 1858, after Furnivall mooted the idea at the Philological Society of a completely new national dictionary instead of a proposed supplement to existing ones, work started on the society's great *New English Dictionary* (later the *Oxford English Dictionary*). Apart from his strong patriotic feelings and his continuing preoccupation with philological studies, Furnivall's chief interest in the project was really a sociological one. He saw the dictionary as a means of providing his contemporaries with a sort of "autobiography" of the English nation, a history of England in terms of its language.

His growing preoccupation with England's past had also a great deal to do with an important event that marked the turning point in his life and career—his conversion in the late 1850s to agnosticism, which left in its wake, as it did for other doubting Victorians, a deep longing for some kind of belief, a *modus vivendi*, an intellectual frame of reference. Furnivall felt very acutely this disruption to the faith of his childhood and youth, and the buoyant fervor and piety with which he had lived the evangelical life was now redirected with fresh, optimistic, and compensatory energy to more secular ends: the celebration and reclamation of the golden ages of England peopled with noble, heroic ancestors.[43] Furnivall's "discovery" of the past is emphasized by Munro:

> Tennyson's *English Idylls* had already turned his [Furnivall's] attention to that distant past wherefrom faint but audible voices called to him, sometimes in the

[41]Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 848. The address was in support of Maurice when he was dismissed from King's College, London.

[42]Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 551. Presumably this was a reference to Harriet Martineau's *History of the Peace* (London, 1855).

[43]See Walter E. Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830-1870,* p. 334.

very accents of his own warmhearted humanism and his own comprehensive democracy; and he grew more and more convinced that these forefathers' voices should be made audible and significant to modern men.[44]

Tennyson had in fact designed the *Idylls* with its pictures of heroism as an antidote to the selfishness and materialism of the Victorian age: "All ages are ages of transition, but this is an awful moment of transition. It seems to me as if there were much less of the old reverence and chivalrous feeling in the world than there used to be. . . . I tried in my 'Idylls' to teach men these things, and the need of the Ideal."[45]

To reveal "the thoughts, manners and customs of our forefathers and foremothers" became Furnivall's purpose in life, and he set about it with that sense of mission and exalted conception of history that so many lapsed Christians of the Victorian age displayed when they found a meaning in life by working strenuously for the good of society. As Munro points out, ". . . the practical necessity which forced Furnivall to strive for the realization of this ideal was the commencement by the Philological Society of the *New English Dictionary*." For Furnivall, then, the dictionary would be, more than anything else, a record of English civilization, and "to bring home to modern men the story and thought of their fathers"[46] was to be the driving force behind not only the dictionary scheme but also, in time, the Early English Text Society and his other societies.

For the rest of his life Furnivall would continue to work on the mammoth dictionary, first as editor after Herbert Coleridge died in 1861, then as one of the principal readers and contributors after Sir James Murray took over the dictionary in 1879. As editor, Furnivall made full use of the principle of "cooperation" that he had learned and put into practice at the Working Men's College, and he was soon recruiting people from far and near for his army of "volunteer" helpers so that reading and collecting materials for the dictionary could proceed.

[44]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. xliii.

[45]Hallam Tennyson, *Alfred Lord Tennyson: A Memoir (1897)*, 2:129.

[46]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. xlvi.

In his diaries Arthur J. Munby gives a firsthand account of "the prime mover in the great Dictionary" at work with his volunteer helpers. The entry for Monday, May 19, 1862 reads:

> After dinner, I went to Ely Place by appointment to see Furnivall. Found him in a strange dingy room upstairs; the walls & floor and chairs strewn with books, papers, proofs, clothes, everything—in wondrous confusion; the table spread with a meal of chaotic and incongruous dishes, of which he was partaking, along with "Lizzy" Dalziel, the pretty lady's maid whom he has educated into such strange relations with himself, and for whose sake he has behaved so madly to Litchfield & others of his best friends; & her brother, a student of our College. After the meal, which lasted from 7 to 9, all four of them set to work, arranging and writing out words for the Philological Dictionary, of which Furnivall is now Editor in place of poor Herbert Coleridge. "Missy," as F. calls the girl, is his amanuensis and transcribes: takes long walks too with him and others, of ten and twenty miles a day; which is creditable to her; and indeed she seems a quiet unassuming creature."[47]

"Missy," or "Lizzy," Dalziel was Eleanor Nickel Dalziel, whose brother, W. A. Dalziel, was a student teacher in the Working Men's College and later secretary of the Early English Text Society and the Chaucer Society. Furnivall married Eleanor Dalziel at the Registrar's Office, Hampstead, in 1862, a few months after Munby's visit. His romance with this pretty young "lady's maid" shocked many of his Victorian friends and associates, as Munby's account indicates. Munby, however, who was sexually fixated on strong, muscular, dirty working women in menial jobs and who secretly married his servant girl, Hannah Cullick, in 1873, keeping her in her menial position until she died in 1909,[48] was hardly qualified to pass judgment on Furnivall's private life. Also, Eleanor Dalziel did not really belong to the servant class, as Munby would like to imply. Eleanor was the daughter of a market gardener, and the "scandal" arose rather from the difference in the couple's ages and the fact that she had been inseparable from Furnivall for some time before they were married.

As a social rebel and defender of women's rights, Furnivall would not have given "a brass farthing" (a favorite phrase of his) for public

[47]Derek Hudson, *Arthur J. Munby: Man of Two Worlds*, pp. 123–24.

[48]Michael Brander, *The Victorian Gentleman*, p. 127.

opinion in the matter. Known to have an eye for attractive young women, he was something of a matchmaker at the Working Men's College and took pride in his success at pairing off young couples—so his marriage to "Lizzy" Dalziel certainly set an example.

The Furnivalls had two children, Ena and Percy. Ena was born in 1862 but died tragically when she was only four years old. Sir Frederic Madden wrote in his journal for Friday, May 4, 1866:

> Mr. Hamilton shewed me a note from Mr. Furnivall, which I was deeply grieved to read. It mentions the death of his only child, a beautiful girl of four years old. The poor bereaved parent states the cause of death to have been this, the child had suffered from diarrhoea and the "maid" was told to give her a mouthful of brandy and water, but instead of a "mouthful" she allowed the child to drink half a tumbler, which immediately flew to the head, the child became insensible, and died without being able to recognise her father.[49]

Furnivall was heartbroken. In his preface to *The Book of Quinte Essence* (1866), he writes: "The loss of my sweet, bright, only child, Eena [sic], and other distress, have prevented my getting up any cram on the subject of quintessence to form a regular Preface."[50]

Percy Furnivall was born in 1867 and was brought up an agnostic. He became a well-known surgeon[51] and champion cyclist, and was associated with his father in editing the works of Thomas Vicary for the Early English Text Society. Furnivall was particularly proud of Percy's fame as a cyclist. Although walking was almost as important to him as sculling, Furnivall did some of his London visiting on a bicycle and often went on weekend cycling trips with his workingmen friends. He was still cycling when he was sixty: a letter from Browning refers to an accident Furnivall has had and asks him not to cycle to visit the Browning home on May 7, 1885.[52]

The founding of the important Early English Text Society in 1864 had the immediate and practical purpose of supplying the *New English Dictionary* with urgently needed materials from Early Eng-

[49]Bodleian Library, MS Eng. Hist. c. 179, pp. 106–107.

[50]Frederick James Furnivall, Preface, *The Book of Quinte Essence*, p. 5.

[51]See *Lancet*, May 14, 1938, p. 1137.

[52]Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 130. See also K. M. Elisabeth Murray, *Caught in the Web of Words*, p. 326.

lish literature, but, of course, Furnivall also saw the society as a means of supplying Victorians with texts that told them of their ancestors' customs, beliefs, manners, and heroic deeds. The yearning among many Victorians for an earlier society of feudal companionship and comradeship, largely destroyed by nineteenth-century industrialism, is seen in this practice of bringing people together in the spirit of cooperation to form committees and societies.[53] The Early English Text Society and Furnivall's other societies were to him social as well as literary "institutions" and, like his rowing clubs and student social outings and gatherings, represented a model community in miniature in which the keynote was comradeship and trust. Furnivall's vast correspondence and his well-known habit of introducing people to each other regardless of rank or background, are other aspects of this comradeship and "family" ideal. He delighted in drawing people into the arena of his literary and social affairs, and his correspondence indicates that he sent his invitations and bulletins to the highest and the lowest in the land. A letter from Matthew Arnold to Furnivall on April 29, 1869 reads: "It seems to me only the other day I saw you in Mount Street, though 20 years have passed since that time. I have followed with interest your dictionary project and your labours in early English literature, and shall be glad to read your preface which I have no doubt I shall find at home on my return."[54] A letter from a Charles F. Secretair asks, "Do you know of any good workfellow, who could and would give an Evening a week to moderate a Cricket Club of working lads?"[55]

Furnivall's passion for companionship was another symptom of the sense of loneliness that beset so many educated but troubled Victorians. Ruskin, Furnivall's close friend, cried: "You can't conceive how lonely I am. All my old religious friends are casting me off; or, if they speak, their words are as the brass and the cymbal."[56] Furnivall found

[53]"The use of the past to evoke a more satisfactory sense of community is evident throughout the 19th century from Carlyle's *Past and Present* to Ruskin's observations on Gothic Art and the social relationships which it reflects." A. Bellringer and C. B. Jones, eds., *Victorian Sages*, p. xi.

[54]Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 4.

[55]Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 798, letter of July 29, 1855 (?).

[56]John Ruskin, *Works*, ed. E. T. Cook and A. Wedderburn, 36:364.

companionship in the society of working-class men and students, tearoom waitresses and shopgirls. It is true that he had a very large circle of literary friends in London whose homes he visited frequently. But his own "families" which he created in his social and professional world meant a great deal to him.[57] Ludlow defended him to an angry Maurice by pointing out that he "looked after" the college students and cared for them—to the extent of listening to their private problems, counseling them, and even promoting marriages among them. The literary societies themselves Furnivall seriously referred to as members of a family tree: the Philological Society was the grandmother of all of them; the Early English Text Society was mother of the Chaucer Society, the Ballad Society, the New Shakspere Society, the Browning Society, and the Shelley Society; and they in turn presumably were "brothers" and "sisters."

Furnivall fiercely guarded and protected his "family" of societies from any attacks upon them. But his tempestuous character tended to create enemies within as well as outside the societies. The unselfish idealism with which he was to devote his life to the advancement of English studies, the jovial, fun-loving bonhomie that drew young people to him, and the generous concern for the poor, the exploited, and the underprivileged were curiously blended in Furnivall with a fiery, vindictive temper which, once roused, knew no bounds; a fearless, aggressive belligerence that frequently had him at loggerheads with eminent men of letters; and a tactless, meddling, outspoken way of going about things that exasperated even his closest friends. The New Shakspere Society is best known today for Furnivall's furious row with Algernon Charles Swinburne over the relative merits of scientific and aesthetic criticism (see chapter 6). Swinburne goaded Furnivall into exposing the worst side of his character, and Furnivall, to quote Munro, "showered unsparing personalities" upon the poet "in terms probably unparalleled for utter lack of restraint, in modern literature."[58]

The New Shakspere Society, the Ballad Society, and the Chaucer Society were founded in rapid succession within ten years of the

[57]In *The Stacions of Rome* (1866) he wrote, "I conceive myself entitled to write Prefaces as to a circle of my Friends; for such I look on Subscribers as being."

[58]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. lvii.

formation of the Early English Text Society. Furnivall proclaimed that the disgraceful neglect by his fellow countrymen of England's balladry and her two greatest poets would soon be put right by his societies, and he commanded all "lovers of the homeland" to subscribe at once so that texts could be printed from the best unpublished manuscripts and valuable works rescued from their obscurity in libraries and private collections throughout the country.

The enormous amount of hard work that Furnivall got through in the 1860s tends to overwhelm the modern reader. It is hard to conceive how he managed to cope with his teaching and social activities at the Working Men's College, his duties as acting editor of the *New English Dictionary,* and his heavy responsibilities as founder and director of three literary societies, while editing texts, corresponding with hundreds of students and scholars, writing articles for periodicals and letters to newspapers, and fulfilling countless other social and scholarly obligations. Other Victorians, such as Walter W. Skeat, Alexander John Ellis, and James Murray, also undertook prodigious amounts of work by modern standards, but it is the sheer variety, as well as the volume, of Furnivall's undertakings that makes his career so remarkable. The self-denial that accompanied his industry has all the flavor of Christian puritanism and is a throwback to his earlier days at Egham and Cambridge. Unlike that of many others,[59] however, Furnivall's physical health was never seriously compromised, simply because he had a solid faith in sport and physical exercise—another Victorian panacea.

References to Furnivall's passion for sculling are scattered throughout his correspondence and literary work. Although he enjoyed cricket, tennis, bathing, cycling, and cross-country walking, his first love remained sculling. Francis Bickley writes:

> He was probably the best-known figure on middle Thames. Boat after boat would greet him as he rowed up on a Sunday morning. . . . For weather-excuses the Doctor had the greatest contempt, and when rain kept away even the most stalwart, he still rowed alone. And wet or fine he always rowed all day. Others might take turns, feeling the need of rest, but Furnivall went on for ever. . . . To row with him was something of an ordeal. His habitual

[59]See Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind*, p. 262.

> frankness was never more in evidence. . . . He spared neither sex nor dignity, and more than one young woman had abandoned the art of sculling, offended by his free-spoken coaching.[60]

If fatigue ever shows in Furnivall when he is at work, it usually comes when there is a concentration of activities, such as the development of one society overlapping with the ongoing operation of another. The following letter to Bradshaw, written on July 14, 1875, about twenty months after the foundation of the New Shakspere Society, provides such an example:

> Is there any hope of your printing and editing your copy of the Univ. Libr *Boethius* MS for the Chaucer Socty? I want another book this year.
>
> A kind of listlessness and pottering has come over me. I get nothing done & only dabble over little bits of Shakspere illustrations etc. I hope you're vigorous & fresh.[61]

Only eight years after he founded the New Shakspere Society, Furnivall formed his Browning Society—within twenty-four hours of its conception—to honor Browning, who for Furnivall was "of all the living . . . the Man of all men, the Poet of all poets." Despite cries of ridicule at Furnivall's proposal to elucidate Browning's works for a bewildered public, he went ahead with his usual confidence, and the Browning Society was soon attracting serious attention in England and abroad.

In the meantime, Furnivall's private life was once again providing fuel for Victorian gossip. In 1882 and 1883 a domestic crisis produced a bigger scandal than his romance with Eleanor Dalziel and their subsequent marriage in the mid-1860s. On December 20, 1882, an outraged Lucy Toulmin Smith wrote to James Murray:

> You asked me the other night why I did not continue to subscribe to the new Sh. Soc. I do not feel satisfied with its management this year, in one particular, wh. seems to me dishonest. But, there is a much worse thing which I must tell you, tho' odious to me.
>
> Furnivall is being separated from his wife, at his own desire, as he has become infatuated with a young girl. He is selling his books & breaking up his house on 24 June.

[60]Munro, *Furnivall*, pp. 2–3.

[61]Cambridge University Library, Bradshaw Papers.

> I tell you this for the sake of the poor innocent wronged wife, to whom he owes *much.* She needs all the manly & womanly sympathy of her friends.
>
> So you will believe me when I say there was a skeleton for me that night of the Shakespeare music. Good heavens, what desecration! Pardon me I feel it deeply.[62]

As Elisabeth Murray notes in *Caught in the Web of Words,* "This was considered such a scandal that James carefully stuck stamp-paper over the signature of the writer who gave him the news."[63] Furnivall was to give Victorian society another jolt. The young girl was his twenty-one-year-old secretary and coworker, Teena Rochfort-Smith. At the beginning of 1883, Furnivall, then fifty-eight, moved his young mistress into his home at 3 St. George's Square, in Primrose Hill, where, of course, his wife, Eleanor, still lived. It is possible that, because Teena Rochfort-Smith had recently been very ill with dysentery and mumps, Furnivall used her illness as an excuse to provide her with comfortable accommodation. In any case, it was clearly part of a prearranged plan, for Furnivall and his wife were legally separated in June, 1883,[64] as Lucy Toulmin Smith had announced. It is unlikely, however, that Furnivall ever left his house in Primrose Hill. If he did, it was only temporarily, because his correspondence during this period continues to bear the old address, while Eleanor went to live first at a house in Hampstead and later in a flat at Belsize Park, where her son, Percy, stayed with her.

Furnivall's romance was a tragic one. In August, Teena went to stay with her uncle at Goole, in Yorkshire. On Tuesday, August 28, as she began to burn some letters, the head of the lighted match ("of the bad kind called Domestics") flew off and set fire to a needlework mat, from which her dress caught fire. She died of her injuries on September 4. As Teena lay dying, Furnivall wandered about near the house in Yorkshire. He later wrote:

> One weary watcher through the night—not admitted to the sick room—walked for a while on the river-bank. The bright sun threw its broad belt of sheen over the wide swirling water. . . . Nature was fresh and glad. On the

[62]Murray Papers. Quoted with the permission of K. M. Elisabeth Murray.

[63]Murray, *Caught in the Web of Words*, p. 89.

[64]The "Indenture," dated June 21, 1883, is a document one foot wide and two feet long.

death-bed within, lay the Mother's darling, the friend's truest friend, worn out by her long sufferings, sinking quietly to her rest.[65]

Teena Rochfort-Smith was an extremely attractive girl, deeply interested and involved in Furnivall's work. "Lizzy," on the other hand, had turned out to be rather indolent and dull, and was fond of sitting passively in a chair. In 1888, Furnivall told Mrs. Walter Slater, "A wife's want of sympathy with her husband's work ruined Dickens's married life, mine too, & hundreds of others besides."[66] At sixty-three Furnivall was still "youthful" and fond of pretty young women. It is most likely, however, that it was Teena's intellectual interest and involvement in his work rather than her looks that attracted Furnivall. In *Teena Rochfort-Smith: A Memoir* (1883), which he presented to the British Museum Library on January 24, 1884, with the printed request that "Mr. Furnivall asks the favour of your accepting this Memoir, and giving a quarter of an hour to read it," Furnivall states that the turning point came in her life when she read "Mr. Furnivall's Introductions to 'Gervinus's Commentaries' and 'The Leopold Shakspere.'" He then lists her accomplishments: her work in the British Museum for the Philological Society's dictionary, her work for the New Shakspere Society and the Browning Society, and her assistance to Furnivall in his Early English Text Society work, including copying manuscripts in Sir Thomas Phillipps's collection at Cheltenham. She also helped with *The Old-Spelling Shakspere* and was preparing a "Four-Text Hamlet." At the New Shakspere Society meeting on October 12, 1883, Furnivall announced that "he himself had, in Miss Rochfort-Smith lost his right hand, his greatest helper and friend, the reader of his every proof and revise, the supplier of his many defects; he could not hope now to finish his share of the Comedies of the *Old-Spelling Shakspere* before next March."[67]

In 1884, Furnivall was awarded a Civil List Pension of £150 a year by William Gladstone's government, "in acknowledgement of your

[65]Frederick James Furnivall, *Teena Rochfort-Smith: A Memoir*, p. 9.

[66]Quoted by W. S. Peterson in *Browning's Trumpeter: The Correspondence of Robert Browning and Frederick J. Furnivall, 1872-1889*, p. xxvii.

[67]Furnivall, *Teena Rochfort-Smith*, p. 14. See also *Cheltenham Ladies' College Magazine* 9 (February, 1884):170-80.

valuable services to the literature of your country."[68] This money must have been a godsend, because his labors for the various societies he had founded and directed had brought no financial rewards. For some time he had depended on the inheritance from his father, but the Overend and Gurney banks, where the money was invested, collapsed in 1866. On May 19, 1866, Furnivall wrote to Henry Bradshaw: "Troubles never come singly & after the loss of our dear little one comes now the breaking of the two banks we had shares in, & the consequent liability. I take refuge in my pigstye."[69] Apart from modest financial help from friends, Furnivall was a poor man until the pressure was eased by a civil pension and the small income he received as trustee of one of the family estates.[70] In a letter to Carew Hazlitt on January 22, 1884, Furnivall wrote about his volunteer work of thirty years and the money he had given "in hard cash" to his societies. The letter concludes:

> . . . and I said what I believe is true, that no man in England has done so much work for nothing, so perseveringly, as I've done. . . . I'd given up hope of any other, when yesterday afternoon, Gladstone's welcome letter came. So whatever happens, I hope to be safe from the Workhouse & able to grind along in the old way till I die.[71]

Furnivall's generosity was well known, and it extended to individuals as well as societies. His account book for 1863–65 shows, for instance, that, despite necessary frugality, he paid out one pound to the Thames ballast heavers who, until Furnivall's intervention with Benjamin Disraeli, were under the tyranny of the riverside publicans (after Furnivall led a deputation of ballast heavers to Disraeli's office in 1848, they were placed under the control of Trinity House, and the

[68]Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 14, Letter from Gladstone to F J F, January 20, 1884.

[69]Cambridge University Library, Bradshaw Papers, MS Add. 2591 (1), fol. 302.

[70]For details of George Furnivall's will, see Munro, *Furnivall*, p. xlii; *Times* (London), July 19, 1910, p. 15*d*. It has been suggested that £500 would be a generous estimate of Furnivall's earnings during his long, industrious career.

[71]British Library, Add. MS 38904, fol. 40. On January 21, 1885, Furnivall wrote to Gladstone: "This day last year you sent me the welcome tidings that you'd given me a Literary Fund Pension of £150. I must thank you heartily for the comparative ease & comfort which your gift has afforded to my son and me during the past year. It has relieved me from much anxiety." British Library, Add. MS 4489, fol. 92.

trouble ended). Twelve years previously, in 1851, he had sold his books for one hundred pounds for the benefit of striking woodcutters.[72]

Furnivall's last literary society, the Shelley Society, was founded in 1886, and its formation was very likely inspired by Percy Shelley's friendship with Furnivall's father. Dr. Furnivall had attended Mary Shelley at the birth of her second child, Clara, when the Shelleys lived at Marlow.

During the closing years of the century Furnivall was as active as ever in promoting the welfare of youth and the underprivileged. He continued to take an energetic interest in the social work he had started fifty years before at the London Working Men's College. He still went rowing on the Thames with his factory girls, waitresses, and Harrods shop assistants. For these girls he founded a rowing club in 1896 at 19 Lower Mall, Hammersmith, and ran it himself. There he spent the happiest days of his life. Since girls had been unfairly excluded from rowing in the past, Furnivall established his club for girls only but later admitted men when handling heavier boats became too strenuous for the girls.[73] On Sundays, winter and summer, until 1910, Furnivall sculled with his girls the fourteen miles from Hammersmith to Richmond and back, and every week he wrote an account of these trips in a column in the *West London Observer.*

Jessie Currie gives an account of one of her own Sunday trips on the river with "the Doctor":

> I met him shortly after nine o-clock on the appointed morning, as he was coming out from his house. Two large string bags were slung over his left shoulder—one hanging in front, and the other behind. These, with a third bag in his right hand, were all full of good things to eat. For this great-hearted host would not let any one give or pay anything when with him up the river. His only desire was that you should be bright and happy, laugh and sing and eat. Few people would have known that some of the greatest living scholars were often in the Doctor's boat, as we sculled up from Richmond to Canbury Island, near Kingston-on-Thames. Here we would have lunch under the trees; and

[72]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. xxiv.

[73]The official title of the club became the Furnivall Sculling Club for Girls and Men. Today only the ruins of the clubhouse and the Furnivall Garden remain. *Westminster Gazette*, April 10, 1901.

> after lunch came "washing up," at which we all assisted, the Doctor superintending the while. This done, the Doctor generally rested for about an hour on the grass, whilst the younger members of the party sculled the boat on either side of the island—sometimes sending a friendly call to him as he lay near the water's edge, to which he would respond by shaking his foot in the air.[74]

Sometimes the rashness Furnivall displayed in his language and actions in the literary world was seen in his sculling activities. One very foggy Sunday morning he insisted on going to Richmond as usual. After pulling as he thought toward Barnes, he came to a bridge, and when he called out, "What bridge is this?" a voice from the fog called back "Hammersmith." Only then did he turn back. On Saturday, June 8, 1901, according to the *Fifth Report of the Committee* (of the rowing club), dated April 19, 1902, thirty-eight poor children from the Waterloo Street Board School arrived at the club for lemonade and biscuits. They were later put into five boats with sweets, cakes, and fruit, and they sculled and sang their way to Kew Gardens. According to one report, "The guests were the dirtiest and most saucy little beggars one could meet in a week's march." A ticket was issued to each child, but when the group arrived at Kew, eight stowaways were discovered aboard. Furnivall insisted that the children should see the greenhouses, and the men from the Working Men's College who were assisting virtually lost control of them once they were let loose in the gardens. The children paddled in the ornamental waters and "practised Boer tactics from behind trees," their ammunition being pebbles and the enemy any animal about the gardens.[75]

Furnivall was particularly fond of the club regattas, especially when there was a long list of competitors. He liked the girls' races most of all, and the great feature of these was the prize giving, when he presided and handed over trophies and prizes (jewelry and stockings for the girls, books for the men), which he had bought himself. The

[74]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. 30.

[75]Bodleian Library, Parry v. Moring and Furnivall Correspondence. "Fifth Report of the Committee, April 19, 1902." On another occasion a party of girls from the Passmore Edwards Settlement sculled from the club to Canbury Island, where they met thirty members of the Sunday Shakspere Society; Baron Kanda, of Japan; Dr. Koch, of Cornell University; and others who had come upriver with Furnivall. In the account of the Christmas celebrations of 1901 is a reference to the "appearance of the President [Furnivall] dressed up by our girls as Father Christmas" to distribute presents. Ibid.

presentations were always followed by an entertaining speech from the president.

In 1904, Furnivall bought from New College, Oxford, a best-rowing eight, which was converted into a sculling eight for the club. After many practice runs to and from Richmond it was manned by eight girls with Furnivall as coxswain. He was delighted to prove that his girls were capable of managing the boat and were equal in watermanship to any previous male crew. The next time they rowed, it was to a battery of press photographers, and articles by Furnivall, a past master at publicity, appeared in all the daily newspapers.[76]

Furnivall's birthday was always celebrated at the clubhouse, the usual tea being supplemented with a huge cake adorned with candles numbering the years of his life. In 1908, he celebrated the occasion by giving a supper for fifty of the oldest and poorest inhabitants of Hammersmith. The club was converted into a restaurant, members became waiters and waitresses, and Furnivall acted as the grand host. He also distributed gifts to his elderly guests—each woman received one pound of tea, and each man a quarter pound of tobacco.[77] The *West London Observer*'s description of Furnivall's birthday celebration in 1902 reads in part: "To make sure the doctor was no worse next day for his dinner, a strong club pair raced him and Mr. Finn the whole seven miles from Messum's to Biffen's, but though they gained about thirty yards on the 'old' un' they could not catch him, as he got away first."[78]

According to J. C. Castell and C. F. W. Mead, the annual general meetings of the club frequently "bordered on the burlesque." As chairman, Furnivall was unique: "Everybody could and would speak at once, and all as often as they liked, subject to cursory remarks from the chair." A speaker once objecting that certain remarks were illogical was interrupted by Furnivall with, "Oh! damn your logic." And when one member was to be expelled by a majority vote, Furnivall in disagreement announced: "All right, if you do, I shall

[76]In one report, which reads, ". . . while the sculls drifted through the placid water," Furnivall has crossed out "drifted" and written in "ript."

[77]The "Old People's Supper," as Furnivall called it, was repeated in 1909.

[78]*West London Observer*, February 28, 1902, p. 2. See *Representative Journal of Aquatics*, June 26, 1897, p. 13, where Furnivall is referred to as a "Veteran Wetbob."

invite the member to use the Club as my personal guest. I pay the rent, so you haven't the power to stop me."[79]

Some of Furnivall's friends invited him and other club members to garden parties at their country homes. George Radford, who opened his house to the club every year, writes: "On some Sunday afternoon in June for the last fourteen consecutive years I have seen him [Furnivall] on a certain lawn on Ditton Hill surrounded by the young men and maidens constituting the club, . . . and he looked on his work and saw that it was good."[80]

Furnivall's love of the countryside and natural beauty is seen in countless references in his letters, prefaces, and contemporary accounts of his activities, and his frequent trips outside London are apparent from the country and seaside addresses in his editions. He frequently went back to Egham to visit and stay at Walnut-Tree Cottage. His many journeys into the countryside were undoubtedly an escape from the hard, busy industrial city. It was a spiritual escape as well as a physical one. As Walter Houghton points out: "The romantic love of nature . . . became the nostalgia for a lost world of peace and companionship, of healthy bodies and quiet minds. The image had its basis in memory, for every Victorian in the city had either grown up in the country or in a town small enough for ready contact with the rural environment."[81] On one occasion Furnivall took action to stop a local landowner from obstructing the beautiful view from the top of Cooper's Hill. He led a body of local tradesmen and others, armed with axes and hammers, to the spot, and the barriers were soon demolished. Then he went back when it was dark and picked off the tops of trees which had been planted to block the view.

The closure of the Chaucer Society in 1892 might seem an appropriate time for Furnivall to have brought to an end his long, extraordinary career as a "privateer" and "scholar-adventurer." He had no intention, however, of reducing his workload and retiring from the world of manuscripts, libraries, literary societies, and sculling clubs. As late as 1907, for example, only three years before he died, his

[79]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. 24.

[80]Ibid., p. 162.

[81]Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind*, p. 79.

daily program was almost as hectic as it had been during the previous fifty years, and his activities were still as wide-ranging and diverse as ever. During that particular year Furnivall presided over the London Shakespeare League, founded and became chairman of the Gifford Street Foster Homes scheme, sent his daily package of newspaper clippings to James Murray at Oxford, sent out his postcards and letters to innumerable correspondents across the world, chaired a committee of the London Shakespeare Commemoration League, and reluctantly relinquished his presidency of the National Rowing Association (Lea Branch).

Throughout he maintained a strict round of routine activities which were centered at the British Museum, the A.B.C. teashop in New Oxford Street, and the Hammersmith Sculling Club. An American scholar, Frederick M. Padelford, describes a visit in 1907 to the Manuscript Room of the British Museum, where he saw "Dr. Frederick Furnivall, the editor of the Early English Text Society's publications," for the first time:

> It was not possible to refrain from watching the man who sat at the opposite desk. He had entered the manuscript-room of the Museum with a step so quick and eager that one naturally looked up from one's work. He took the nearest seat, called for a manuscript, unrolled a large bundle of proof, and went at the correcting of it with the zeal of a young scholar who has received his first galleys. His eye was bright and piercing, and his glance travelled from manuscript to proof and from proof to manuscript with quick, keen regularity. It was like watching a well-trained field-dog at his work. . . . only twice in the hour and a half that he was there did he raise his eyes—that was to glance at the clock. At 4.30 he abruptly arose, jammed the proof into a big side-pocket, returned the manuscript, and left with the same elastic step with which he had entered, his legs hurrying after his eager head as if fearing to be left behind.
>
> His appearance had been as striking as his manner of work. He was slight and somewhat stooped. His colour was high and his forehead and neck showed evidence of recent sunburn, a contrast to the pale, dull-eyed elderly men about him. He wore a bright red Ascot tie, and from his upper coat-pocket protruded a large silk handkerchief of a magenta shade.[82]

[82]Munro, *Furnivall*, pp. 139–40.

Furnivall was, of course, hurrying off to the A.B.C. teashop at 66 New Oxford Street to hold his open house at 4:30 P.M. for a motley company of scholars, boating men, professors, Working Men's College students, novelists, and politicians, all of whom were expected to fraternize regardless of social class or background.

Having been introduced to Furnivall at the A.B.C., Padelford was immediately invited to have tea at the Hammersmith Sculling Club on Sunday afternoon. There he found about one hundred young men and women making sandwiches and preparing tea:

> "No, the Doctor was just in from his boat, and was taking his cold shower, but he would be up presently."
>
> It was a raw, foggy afternoon.
>
> "But he hasn't been sculling today, has he?"
>
> "Oh, yes, he has just done his fourteen miles; that's his minimum. If he has too much steam aboard he makes it twenty, but that's almost too much for the rest of us, and unless he goes alone he usually has to content himself with the shorter spin."
>
> Eighty-two years of age, and sculling fourteen miles every Sunday! Now I begin to understand the colour in his cheeks.[83]

On the way to the train at 10 o'clock that night, Furnivall spoke to Padelford about his plans for the future of the club: "I can't last many years longer at the most, and I want them to incorporate and start to buy the club house, so that the club won't go to smash when I do."[84] According to Munro, when Furnivall was asked whether he would like a system of English scholarships, or something else, to commemorate him when he died, Furnivall "was firm on one thing: 'I want the Club.'"[85]

When he was told that he was dying of cancer of the intestine, Furnivall's first thought was of the work he still had in mind to do. He asked his son, Percy, whether he could give him one more year, but was informed that it was more likely to be six months; it was in fact not more than about four. With his usual outspokenness Furnivall informed his friends that he had six months to live. He sent out letters

[83]Ibid., p. 141.

[84]Ibid., p. 142.

[85]Ibid., p. lxxxi.

and postcards, and when a notice appeared in the newspapers, he was inundated with letters of condolence. On April 16, 1910, he sent Albert Feuillerat a clipping from a newspaper with the relevant passage firmly underlined. According to J. H. Wylie, Furnivall's attitude was that "the specialist knew his business and he could not possibly be wrong, and if any one urged that at least he ought not to have been told the worst, his answer was that he was a man and knew how to bear it." When Wylie visited him for the last time on June 28, 1910, Furnivall "was lying exhausted on a sofa in the room where he had long worked, surrounded with his books, and his Chaucer and Browning and other mementos." Although Wylie was allowed to stay for only a very brief time, Furnivall "seemed interested to hear of the recent Bodleian find that will probably go far to establish the truth of the Shaksperian legend of the wild days of Prince Hal."[86]

Furnivall died on Saturday, July 2, 1910, at 3 St. George's Square, Primrose Hill, and newspaper posters in London streets carried the news that one of the best-known Victorian figures had passed away. Furnivall was cremated on Tuesday, July 5, 1910, at the Golder's Green Crematorium. There was no service, but an organ recital was given by Philip Cooke. A large and varied crowd of mourners attended the funeral. Around the catafalque stood representatives from the many educational and learned bodies with which he had been connected, including the London Shakespeare League, the Oxford University Press, the English Association, the Board of Education, and the *Oxford English Dictionary;* students, friends, and associates from the British Museum, the New Oxford Street A.B.C. teashop, and the London Working Men's College; and a group of young people from the Furnivall Sculling Club at Hammersmith.

[86]Ibid., p. 205.

CHAPTER 3

# Christian Socialist and Educator at the London Working Men's College

THE ORIGINS of the Working Men's College probably lay in the establishment in 1848 of the Little Ormond Yard School, which was one result of the Christian Socialists' missionary work in Bloomsbury. Few of the pioneer teachers had had any experience of poverty and working men's problems, and it was in this small school for workers and their children that they became interested in a venture that later was enlarged to become the college. John Munro's account of the opening of the school reflects young Furnivall's strenuous evangelical philanthropy, as well as his vigorous haste in getting schemes off the ground:

> The affair was carried out, like the Browning Society, in less time than it would take most people to consider the *pros* and *cons*. On the morning of Thursday 21 September, 1848, Furnivall bought the desks and furniture for the school and in the same day it was formally opened by himself, Penrose, Campbell, Ludlow, and Parker, and by Clark, the curate, who read a few verses from Ecclesiastes and prayed.[1]

The extent of Dr. Furnivall's displeasure at these missionary activities in London is clear in the following letter from Egham, dated August 26, 1851, to his impecunious pioneering son:

> MY DEAR FREDK.
> Agreeably to your request I enclose you £10 on Barclay's. . . . Your business is Law; mine is Physic. Neither you nor I have any business with Teachers or Ragged Schools. . . .With ragged schools, Socialism or any ism, you have really

[1]John Munro, *Frederick James Furnivall: A Volume of Personal Record*, p. xviii.

> no business at all. . . . Lawism, not Socialism, Schoolism, or any other ism, ought to be your End and Aim, your Duty, your Pleasure, and Pursuit. Don't play at Law and work at School teaching.[2]

Young Furnivall, however, was now so deeply committed to his "isms" that there was no longer any question of his giving up his Socialist ideals and goals to sit in a conveyancer's office. Once he was drawn into the center of Christian Socialist activities, there was no turning back. Strong influences drove him on to fight social injustice, ignorance, and oppression. For example, he was in touch with the powerful personality of Thomas Carlyle, whom he met at the Ruskins';[3] and Harriet Martineau's cottage-building society, her lectures on sanitary reform, and her books on economics filled him with enthusiasm.[4] His future as a social and educational reformer was already determined. Describing Furnivall in the 1850s, Munro writes:

> He threw himself with ardour into labour agitation, took the chair at public meetings, spoke in the streets, and presided over a protest meeting in a Lambeth railway arch. . . . He made almost daily visits to Ludlow, heard Maurice preach every Sunday in Lincoln's Inn and attended his Tuesday Bible readings. . . . He organised treats for poor children, and for their parents. He read law, visited Ruskin, Tennyson, Macmillan, Lady Spearman, Lady Noel Byron, and many other friends; attended philological and teetotal meetings. . . . inspected art galleries and the Great Exhibition.[5]

The series of weekly Bible classes begun at Maurice's house in December, 1848, provided a kind of spiritual nucleus for all those connected with the Christian Socialists' projects. Maurice later traced the beginnings of the Working Men's College to these Bible classes, but it is more likely that the idea was actually mooted at the Hall of Association at 34 Castle Street, East Oxford Street, which became the

[2]Ibid., pp. xix–xx.

[3]A letter from Ruskin on December 19, 1860, invites Furnivall to dinner with Thomas Carlyle, "the celebrated writer," at *"half past four."* Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 796.

[4]Furnivall first met Harriet Martineau at Bellenden Ker's in 1851 and discussed with her Carlyle's *Sterling*, Darwin, and mesmerism. "H. M. tried to mesmerise me," he later recorded, "but couldn't; and nearly mesmerised herself." Munro, *Furnivall*, p. xx. Some letters to Furnivall from Mrs. Gaskell and Harriet Martineau are in the British Library. See British Library, Add. MS 43798.

[5]Munro, *Furnivall*, pp. xxiv–xxv.

headquarters of the Christian Socialist movement and was used for conferences on cooperation and lectures on various subjects.[6] These lectures continued throughout 1853[7] and 1854 until the new college opened, and even after that some of the college activities were held in the Hall.[8]

The final decision to establish the Working Men's College was taken in 1853, when Lloyd Jones's news of the highly successful experiment at the Sheffield People's College[9] more or less coincided with the expulsion of Maurice from King's College, London, because of his theological and economic beliefs, and an address from nearly a thousand sympathetic working men asking him to become principal of a Working Men's College.[10] The list of founders of the college (as determined at the college jubilee in 1904[11]) was Maurice, Hughes, John Westlake, Lowes Dickinson, Ludlow, Llewellyn Davies, Richard B. Litchfield, and Furnivall. Derrick Leon points out, however, in *Ruskin: The Great Victorian:*

> It was Furnivall—Furnivall with his "seraph brow, and sweetly happy mouth, and great dark eyes, and a provoking, self-willed, arbitrary way of behaving"—

[6]In 1852 a series of fortnightly lectures was begun, and speakers included national figures in Chartist and radical reform circles. The November-December program for that year lists lectures on a wide range of subjects; for example, Maurice lectured on "The History Plays of Shakespeare," Walter Cooper spoke on "The Life and Genius of Burns," and others gave instruction in such subjects as the Book of Proverbs, photography, and astronomy. All the lecturers were Christian Socialists. The classes grew, and although they were originally intended only for associates, they were opened to others, including women.

[7]In an advertisement a lecture by Thomas Hughes, "Modern Ballads," is announced for April 4, 1853.

[8]In a talk in 1894, Ludlow said that "the Working Men's College was only a development of classes held throughout 1853 at the Hall of Association in Castle Street." J. F. C. Harrison, *A History of the Working Men's College*, p. 17.

[9]In *College Magazine*, September, 1860, pp. 145–46, Furnivall writes: "A great want had been all along felt for better education among cooperators, and at our meeting on 11 January, 1854, the minute book says 'A conversation took place concerning the establishment of a People's College in London in connection with the associations, and Mr. Vansittart Neale read a letter received from the secretary of the People's College at Sheffield as to its origin and history.' "

[10]N. C. Masterman, *John Malcolm Ludlow: The Builder of Christian Socialism*, p. 165. A pamphlet in support of Maurice about his dismissal is signed by "Members of the Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn, and members of the congregation of Lincoln's Inn Chapel"; Maurice's reply is attached. See British Library, Add. MS 43798, fols. 53–54.

[11]"The founders were those who took part in the meetings in 1854, previous to the actual opening, provided that they also took part as teachers, not necessarily in the first term." Harrison, *John Malcolm Ludlow*, p. 32.

> and Maurice . . . who were the guiding lights of the College; and after a conversazione to which the pupils had been invited to bring guests, the enthusiastic young Octavia Hill wrote to a friend a vivid impression of these two leaders. "There stood Mr. Maurice, his grave face lighted by a smile of delight and sweetness in the realisation of much that he had worked for. And here and there and everywhere glanced the fire of Mr. Furnivall's intensely joyous eyes, delighting in all things, seeing everyone, utterly unconscious of himself, doing all that was needed, his soul dwelling continually in sympathy as deep as it is strong."[12]

Maurice hoped that the new Working Men's College would come even closer to his ideal of a college than the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge. The word "college" was carefully chosen because it symbolized for him the very spirit of a corporate life, of fellowship, of brotherhood in the deepest Christian sense. In the first college circular, issued in 1854, Maurice wrote:

> The name College is an old and venerable one. It implies a Society for fellow work, a Society of which teachers and learners are equally members, a Society in which men are not held together by the bond of buying and selling, a Society in which they meet not as belonging to a class or a caste, but as having a common life which God has given them and which He will cultivate in them.[13]

This statement shows, among other things, that the college was making a clean break with all earlier adult-education movements; the fundamental aim here was quite different from, say, that of the mechanics' institutes which had until then dominated the adult-education scene with their science programs for artisans, their "bread-winning" courses, and their general insistence upon pursuing a utilitarian social philosophy.[14] Maurice's idea of a college unites two of his own basic ideals, the spirit of Christian brotherhood (which underlies his and the other founders' Christian Socialism), and the humanist tradition of Oxford and Cambridge. The idea of a college, then, far from being "a mere organisational convenience," to use Harrison's

[12]Derrick Leon, *Ruskin: The Great Victorian*, p. 227.

[13]Harrison, *John Malcolm Ludlow*, p. 21. "Maurice gave papers and lectures in various parts of the country explaining his ideas. He thus became the leading exponent of his time of adult education." W. E. Styler, ed. *Learning and Working*, p. 18.

[14]Richard D. Altick, *The English Common Reader*, p. 189.

words,[15] was determined by the philosophy of Maurice and the other founders and was, therefore, at the very heart of the whole venture. The emphasis at the new Working Men's College was to fall on liberal studies instead of technical studies and on the development of a strong social life with a total disregard for strict class distinctions to help develop brotherhood and fellowship among the men and their teachers.[16]

Yet their socialism was not as thoroughgoing as they probably thought it was. Margaret Hodgen describes the disparity:

> But the movement for working-class education, deriving its influence from the Church and University, represented the educational wing of mid-century liberalism. Mid-century liberalism, in spite of a genuine concern for the suffering of the people, relied on middle-class rather than working-class leadership. Consequently, fellowship between labour and learning to Christian Socialists, University instructors, and Canon Barnett meant one thing, while fellowship between labour and learning according to leaders of the working class meant quite another.[17]

A case in point is the question of student government at the London Working Men's College. Furnivall and Ludlow felt strongly that the executive body of the college should be composed of an equal number of teachers and students. Their advice was ignored for six years, however, largely because of Maurice's views about self-government, which were embodied in the original scheme for the college. He insisted that "we who begin the institution must claim authority over it, and not hastily resign our authority."[18] When the Working Men's College Council received its three new student members for the first time on Thursday, May 28, 1863, the students chose that moment to denounce the terms of their recent election and demand that more students be made members of the college council. Arthur J. Munby,

[15]Harrison, *A History of the Working Men's College*, p. 21.

[16]A letter from Edward Henry Stanley, Fifth Earl of Derby, on April 9, 1856, at the House of Commons shows that Furnivall had appealed to him for help: "I agree that adult education deserves as much help from Government as that given to children . . . . I doubt whether a specific Resolution to that effect would stand any chance of being carried." Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 829.

[17]Margaret Hodgen, *Workers' Education in England and the United States*, pp. 111–12.

[18]Harrison, *A History of the Working Men's College*, p. 91.

friend and contemporary of Furnivall, has described this meeting in his diaries. The following is an excerpt:

> It was curious to see the lasting antagonism between the gentleman and the snob, the educated and half-educated, breaking out among us, of all bodies; & all our liberal "radical" members suddenly changed to conservatives & aristocrats in spite of themselves. . . . Ludlow, vehement and illogical, took the part, impromptu, of the malcontents, Furnivall of course assisting."[19]

However, while Furnivall clearly wanted to treat every man as an equal and a friend, even he had subconscious feelings of superiority, as Eden and Cedar Paul are happy to point out in *Proletcult* (*Proletarian Culture*). They quote a passage from Davies's history of the Working Men's College in which Furnivall describes his meeting with a former student of his grammar class:

> After telling me *how well he had got on,* what classes he was teaching drawing to, etc., he said: "And do you know how all this came about? . . . I was in your class at the College, and you askt me to tea with some of the others. *I'd never been in a gentleman's room before, and when I came out, after seeing your pictures, books, and chairs, I said to myself, 'I'll have as good a room as that.' And now I've got a better.*" Cheering, wasn't it, and so unexpected.

The Pauls continue:

> We have taken the liberty of italicising the more salient passages, with their quaint aroma of "Self-help" and Samuel Smiles . . . . Like Toynbee Hall, Oxford House, the University Extension Movement, and similar products of the late-Victorian era, these mid-Victorian educational activities were the gifts of conscience-stricken members of the bourgeois class, the gifts of persons willing to do anything for the workers—except get off their backs.[20]

This inconsistency between democratic humanism and a class sense of superiority which sometimes becomes outright autocracy, runs right through Furnivall's career. It is seen, for instance, in his dealings with people involved in the work of his literary societies and even with those connected with his rowing activities. Yet these earlier signs of the paradox in Furnivall's behavior detected by the Pauls are

[19]Derek Hudson, *The Life and Diaries of Arthur J. Munby, 1828-1910*, p. 163. Munby was a barrister, minor poet, and literary figure.

[20]Eden Paul and Cedar Paul, *Proletcult*, pp. 38-39.

really part of the larger paradox of Christian Socialism. Ludlow was probably the only Christian Socialist who had a clear idea of what the term actually meant, and Furnivall was no doubt correct in claiming that Ludlow was "the true mainspring" of the movement. The ambivalence in Furnivall's attitudes is found in the writings and deeds of other Christian Socialists. In *The Spirit of Reform,* Patrick Brantlinger provides an excellent analysis of this two-sidedness which has its fullest expression in Maurice's "thorny political theology." Brantlinger shows, for example, how Kingsley sees church, gentlemen, and workers ranged against shopkeepers and the Manchester School, while Maurice's confusing quest for brotherly love and union in Christ (a kind of "historical communism of the Church") allows him to be, like Coleridge, "at once radical and conservative, a democrat and a monarchist, a socialist and a supporter of the institution of private property."[21] Brantlinger concludes: "In their attempt to 'christianize Socialism,' Maurice and his followers succeeded in the sense that they were one of the factors that helped to develop the cooperative movement away from Owenite 'community building' to self-help 'shopkeeping.'"[22] That conclusion is supported by Furnivall's own statement about "how well he had got on" and by the student's statement that "I'd never been in a gentleman's room before," which point, as the Pauls claim, to the continuance of a social and economic system that is mainly aristocratic or capitalist. Furnivall's democratic stance is, of course, further compromised by his father's exploitation of a private lunatic asylum. Like Dr. Furnivall and many other Victorians, however, Furnivall was obviously able to turn his back on such inconsistencies.

After the college got under way, Maurice, Ludlow, Furnivall, and other founders were joined by some very prominent undergraduates from Oxford and Cambridge and other men who had already made their reputations: John Ruskin, Charles Kingsley, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and G. Lowes Dickinson. Furnivall drew up the first list of classes for the October term of 1854, and the subjects, taught by the staff of volunteers, included French, drawing, arithmetic, English

[21]Patrick Brantlinger, *The Spirit of Reform*, p. 136.

[22]Ibid., p. 147.

history, English literature, grammar, public health, and bookkeeping. There was some concern that not enough men would be interested in joining the classes, so Furnivall and others canvassed the local trade-union branches for students. Some shoemakers were found, and they were quickly seized by Furnivall for his English grammar class.

The great popularity of the drawing class at the college was largely due to the prestige of the teacher, John Ruskin. At Ruskin's first lecture on October 30, 1854, Furnivall handed out to everyone present a reprint of Ruskin's chapter "On the Nature of Gothic Architecture," from *The Stones of Venice*, a statement of "the conclusions drawn from the study of art respecting the conditions under which the life of the workman should be regulated." Here is Furnivall's own account (which contains examples of his favorite phonetic spelling):

> When, after the failure of all our Co-operative Associations, we started the Working Men's College in 1854, I askt Ruskin to help us, he agreed at once to organise the Art Classes, and with what good results. . . . Ruskin also helpt us greatly at our start, for, feeling that the working-men we wanted to reach, didn't like parsons, and knew little or nothing of Maurice—who had written nothing to "fetch" them—I got Ruskin to let me reprint from *The Stones of Venice* his chapter "On the Nature of Gothic Architecture." . . . and we put a copy of this sympathetic and noble writing on working men into the hands of every one of the folk—some 600—who attended our opening meeting in Hullah's Hall at the corner of Endell Street and Long Acre.[23]

Furnivall had met Ruskin only a few years before. Furnivall's account of the meeting is very characteristic and also provides a glimpse of how he went about getting to know distinguished Victorians:

> It must have been in 1848, 9, or 1850 that I was one Saturday evening, probably in May, at an "At Home"—Conversazione then, I suppose—in Chester Terrace, Regent's Park, at the house of a friend whom I first met at the Philological Society, when his sweet-natured clever wife came up to her cousin, with whom I was chatting about the London poor, and said "John, I want you to come and talk to Mrs. Ruskin." "Not I," said Dobbin-like John, "I'm much too shy for such a smart body." As he spoke, I turned and followed

[23]W. Robertson Nicoll and Thomas J. Wise, eds. *Literary Anecdotes of the Nineteenth*

his look at a handsome tall young woman with rosy cheeks and wavy black hair, in a charming pink waterd silk dress, prettily ruched from shoulder to foot (I can see her now). Mrs H.W. said to me, "Will you come, Mr. Furnivall?" "I should think I would," answered I, "only give me the chance." She did give it me. I talkt eagerly and enthusiastically about Ruskin to his wife, and she askt me to come and see him in Park Street, at the back of Park Lane, at half-past three next day. I put her into her brougham; and on Sunday afternoon, be sure, I was in Park Street to the minute. After a short chat with the wife, I saw the door open, and John Ruskin walkt softly in. I sprang up to take the outstretcht hand, and then and there began a friendship which was for many years the chief joy of my life. Ruskin was a tall slight fellow, whose piercing frank blue eye lookt through you and drew you to him. A fair man, with rough light hair and reddish whiskers, in a dark blue frock coat with velvet collar, bright Oxford blue stock, black trousers and patent slippers—how vivid he is to me still! The only blemish in his face was the lower lip, which protruded somewhat: he had been bitten there by a dog in his early youth. But you ceast to notice this as soon as he began to talk. I never met any man whose charm of manner at all approacht Ruskin's. Partly feminine it was, no doubt; but the delicacy, the sympathy, the gentleness and affectionateness of his way, the fresh and penetrating things he said, the boyish fun, the earnestness, the interest he showd in all deep matters, combined to make a whole which I have never seen equalld.[24]

Furnivall was not one to stand back and miss any opportunities. Indeed, he was more likely to intrude, as James Murray and George Smith, Browning's publisher, were to discover later. Sidney Lee's comment on Furnivall in the *Dictionary of National Biography* that "he cannot be absolved of a tendency to make mischief and stir up strife" is a truthful one. When the scandal about the Ruskin marriage erupted in 1854,[25] Furnivall was soon on the scene to comfort Ruskin—and help spread rumors. Characteristically, he remained loyal to Ruskin throughout the affair, and his concern was absolutely genuine. Yet he tactlessly and indiscreetly passed on reports and innuendos about John Millais and Effie Ruskin that merely aggravated the unfortunate situation. For instance, when Ruskin wrote to

*Century*, 2:46.

[24]Ibid., pp. 4-5n.

[25]Ruskin's marriage was apparently never consummated. In 1854 it was annulled on the petition of his wife, Effie, who married J. E. Millais in 1855.

him on May 1, 1854, before the news was public, expressing the hope that his friends would not condemn him too harshly, Furnivall told Millais and also informed him incorrectly that Ruskin had left for Switzerland. Effie's concern about this leak is seen in her letter to Rawdon Brown of May 9, 1854:

> He [Ruskin] can have written to nobody but Mr. Furnivall, who is an amiable weak young man, a vegetarian, Christian Socialist and worshipper of men of genius, as I had a letter from his [Ruskin's] greatest admirer and friend Lady Trevelyan, with whom he maintains a very constant correspondence. She said she had not had a word on the subject from himself or anyone else but me.[26]

On May 16 an irritated Millais wrote to Furnivall: "What is the good of telling me what people have already said about myself, and Mrs. R. that was? If fashionable gents. will quickly settle matters amongst themselves, why let them . . . . I don't quite see how a report of that kind is to distress or annoy me."[27]

Ruskin's decision to accept Furnivall's pressing invitation to teach at the Working Men's College marked one of the most significant turning points in the whole range of nineteenth-century cultural history. Ruskin's friends could not understand his devotion to what one of his biographers calls "this rough navvy labour of philanthropy."[28] Nonetheless, with the help of Rossetti and Lowes Dickinson, he continued in his "rough labours" until 1858, and after his retirement many distinguished artists, friends, and contemporaries, such as Pre-Raphaelites Rossetti, Maddox Brown, Stacey Marks, Cave Thomas, Sir Edward Burne-Jones, Valentine Prinsep, and Arthur Hughes, enthusiastically carried on the work of the college.[29]

Furnivall taught classes in English grammar and in "The Structure and Derivations of English Words." The following excerpt from a letter written by Charles Kingsley on November 24, 1854, shows that Furnivall had approached him for help and advice in this matter:

[26]Mary Lutyens, *Millais and the Ruskins*, p. 207.

[27]Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 657.

[28]W. G. Collingwood, *Life of Ruskin*, p. 150; R. A. Woods and A. J. Kennedy, *The Settlement Horizon*, p. 13.

[29]An account of the art classes is given in J. Llewellyn Davies, *The Working Men's College, 1854-1904*, pp. 34ff.

> If I had what you want, I wd. send it at once, . . . but I gave *no* lectures on Comp. at Qu. C. except the Introductory one . . . . I advise you *not* to give your men too much composition; but to keep them hard and sharp at scientific grammar in wh., I hear, you are well up. Malden & Key, of the London University are the men to consult on that point. . . . By all means make your class (as soon as you have got them in hand) write all on the same subject. It will never do to let them choose their own.[30]

From all acounts his classes in grammar were extremely successful, though he and many of his colleagues, like the later University Extension lecturers, were amateurs at the business of teaching. Wearing his corduroy trousers to make his working-men students feel at home with him, Furnivall told his first class with his customary frankness that he made no pretense of being a teacher, for he had never taught before and had all the business to learn; however, he had "worked a good deal at English" (presumably a reference to his philological activities and his reading of Ruskin and Tennyson) and was "game to help anyone who'd worked less"; in any case he hoped that they would all be good friends and get on together. Apparently they did from the start. John Roebuck, who later became a student teacher at the college, writes in his "Reminiscences":

> I entered only one class, that in English grammar, taught by Frederick J. Furnivall, M.A. of Trinity Hall, Cambridge. On presenting myself on the first class night, November 2, 1854, I found somewhere between a dozen and a score of fellow-students of various ages, some older, most younger, than myself. I also found Mr. Furnivall, and from that day to this his personality has always been a treasured recollection. His geniality and the winning brightness of his smile were at once appreciated by me, as they have been by hundreds, and perhaps thousands since.[31]

Forty years after he left the college, a grateful former student in the grammar class wrote to Furnivall from the United States: "It was in your class I was introduced to John Ruskin . . . . You may remember that as a manual for analysis we used extracts from the *Stones of*

[30]British Library, Add. MS 43789, fols. 43-44. See also British Library, Ashley "A" MS 3920, fol. 92, for a letter dated May 13, 1853, on the subject of "language and words."

[31]Davies, *The Working Men's College*, p. 63.

*Venice.* Well, during the analysis, I fell in love with the author and was led to read his books more extensively."[32]

In the early college reports Furnivall's name figures frequently both as a lecturer and as an examiner in English language and literature. A letter from Ruskin agreeing to give Furnivall a testimonial for a post as examiner shows that Furnivall liked to spread the gospel outside as well as inside the classroom:

> . . . you know how you used to find fault with me for speaking ill of philology, and how you, in alliance with the Dean of Westminster [Richard Chenevix Trench], first showed me the true vital interest of language. While I have not one whit slacked in my old hatred of all science which dwelt or dwells in words instead of *things,* I have been led by you to investigations of words as interpreters of things, which have been very fruitful to me; and so amusing, that now a word-hunt is to me as exciting as, I suppose, a fox-hunt could be to anybody else.[33]

In 1858, Furnivall continued to teach English grammar but also moved from lecturing on *Piers Plowman*—selected by him significantly because of its sketch of working men in the fourteenth century—to lectures on Chaucer, Tennyson, and other poets. The following is recorded for 1858–59 in "Annals of the College," published in the *Working Men's College Journal* (1894): "Dr. (then Mr.) Furnivall was the teacher both of English literature and Grammar. In the former capacity he was leading his class to appreciate the somewhat archaic beauties of Chaucer and of Piers Plowman."[34] For Furnivall, of course, the beauties of Chaucer and Langland were certainly not archaic. The full appreciation of social history revealed in *Piers Plowman* and the gentle humanity of Chaucer, "the second greatest poet of our country,"[35] was essential to his students if they were to benefit from England's literary treasures.

[32]*Working Men's College Journal*, March, 1894, p. 43. Publication of the *Journal* (in place of the *Magazine*) began in 1890. Many references to Furnivall or to articles, etc., by him can be found in the following volumes: *Working Men's College Magazine*, vols. 1–3; *Working Men's College Journal*, vols. 1–17, 20–25.

[33]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. xxiii. The letter was probably written sometime between 1856 and 1864.

[34]Ludlow taught Tennyson and English for foreigners. J. J. Dent, *John Malcolm Forbes Ludlow*, p. 10.

[35]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. 1. In a letter to Furnivall on November 30, 1858, L. Toulmin Smith offers to lecture at the college on "Heroic Mythology of England and Its Remains in Our Day." Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 819.

The students at the college, however, apparently did not share Furnivall's great enthusiasm for medieval English literature, because in 1858 he was appealing for help to William Gaskell, the husband of the novelist Elizabeth Gaskell and an instructor in English in Manchester Working Men's College. Mrs. Gaskell replied on June 12, 1858, on behalf of her husband, ". . . if you would let him know at what hour *your* class at the College is, I feel sure that he will if possible attend it, and afterwards give you any little assistance that he can."[36] In the April, 1859, issue of the *College Magazine,* Furnivall wrote under the heading "Mr. Gaskell and His English literature class at Manchester":

> As you propose to put into your Magazine papers on the ways of teaching different subjects, I beg you to let me ask Mr. Gaskell to give us a Paper on his method of teaching English Literature. His class on that subject is the most numerously attended one in the Manchester College; and I have long heard of the great success of his ladies' and other classes in English literature. Our classes at the London College in it have not succeeded, and at Wolverhampton, I see that the E. L. Class began with fourteen pupils, ended with seven, and then disappeared.[37]

Gaskell replied to Furnivall's query in the May issue of the magazine, explaining that, using *Spalding's Outlines* as a textbook, he started the study of literature with the Anglo-Saxon period and "worked [his] way steadily down to the reign of Charles II." Emphasis was placed on the derivation and meaning of unusual words found in selected passages read aloud by students, and he dwelled at length on "works that are of peculiar value, or not likely to be accessible to the students generally."[38]

The poor showing of English literature at the college must have been a great disappointment to Furnivall, considering how central the subject was to his whole philosophy. Very soon, however, he would be extending his teachings to the public at large by founding the Early English Text Society (1864), the Ballad Society (1868), and the

[36]Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 317. There are also letters on the same subject from Vernon Lushington, whom Furnivall had approached about the problems of teaching. See MS FU 521, letter, July 19, 1855; MS FU 522. See also MS FU 185, letter dated December 1, 1856, from Samuel Clark, Battersea Training College.

[37]*Working Men's College Magazine*, April, 1859, p. 72.

[38]*Working Men's College Magazine*, May, 1859, pp. 89-90.

Chaucer Society (1868) to unearth, edit, and publish texts of great English writers from the past. Such antiquarianism in literature paralleled, of course, the revival of Gothicism in architecture and Pre-Raphaelitism in painting. A letter from Vernon Lushington in 1855 reflects Furnivall's enthusiasm for information about noble ancestors:

> In St. Nicholas's, the old parish church here, there is a painted window, & underneath this window the following inscription, "In memory of the ancient family of Furnivall, of Liverpool & the descendants of the last survivor this Window is dedicated by her grand-daughter Elisabeth Ann Carew, AD 1853." . . . I thought *you* would like to know this.[39]

In 1858, Furnivall made a pilgrimage to Normandy with a group of working men from the college to visit the homestead of his Anglo-Norman ancestors, which he (wrongly) supposed to be Fourneville, near Honfleur and Beuzeville. The party proceeded "as far as possible on foot." Thomas Shorter, the secretary of the college, gives a description of the tour in *The Two Worlds* (1858), . . . and refers to Furnivall as an individual "a main article whose creed is, that the chief end of man is to walk forty miles a day on a diet of bread, apples, and harricot beans."[40]

Furnivall's lack of success in revealing to students through the study of English literature the glories of England's past was more than compensated for by his triumph as self-appointed director of social activities at the college. The ideals of comradeship, freedom, equality, and healthy exercise which he sometimes failed to inculcate in the lecture room he applied in a more practical way in educational excursions to the countryside, rowing on the river, playing cricket, dancing, singing, and picnicking.

The excursions from the college were made on Sundays, and many of the details of these geological and botanical walks, or Sunday "tramps," and his boating trips and cricket matches[41] are found in the *People's Paper* of the Sunday League, to which Furnivall appealed in 1858 for "a column a week—to let us (the Working Men's Clubs of

[39]Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 523.

[40]Quoted in Munro, *Furnivall*, p. xxxiii.

[41]These matches were played first at Primrose Hill, then at Gospel Oak Field.

England) have our friendly chat among ourselves."[42] These outdoor activities took the place of the highly popular social meetings which flourished at the college during the winter months, and the summer events became part of the normal life of the college within the first five years of its existence. The first excursion, on Whitmonday, 1856, was to Hampton Court and Bushey Park, with dinner at Teddington. A little later the same summer an especially memorable visit was made to the Firs, the Hughes-Ludlow houses with joint library at Wimbledon Common, where games on the lawns were combined with talks on botany by Charles Kingsley and entomology by Lord Goderich.[43] Rowing between Hammersmith and Richmond under Furnivall's expert stroking was open to everyone who could meet his exacting demands.

On the "healthful" side of things, Furnivall was as convinced as Kingsley, with whom he went on long tramps, that "everything which ministers to the *corpus sanum* will minister also to the *mentem sanam*"[44]. According to Munro, "The frequent half-day program" for Furnivall's Sunday rambles with students from the college was to "meet at King's Cross at three, walk to Epping—16 miles—by seven, tea till eight, and back at King's Cross by twelve, all done to the minute, whatever the weather was."[45] A letter from a James Fisher to Furnivall on September 12, 1859, reads: "These confounded excursions quite knock a fellow over for the next day or two."[46] About ten years later, on May 25, 1870, an anxious Sir John Robert Seeley writes to the athletic Furnivall from 43 Regent's Park Road: "Many thanks for your letter and careful details and for Mrs. Furnivall's kind invitation. Tell me how long the walk you plan for us is. My Mary is a fast walker but does not hold out very long and I am afraid of tiring her."[47]

The walks were more popular with the students than the rowing despite the rigorous routine, and after a student complained to

[42]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. xxvi.

[43]See John Roebuck's account of this visit in Davies, *The Working Men's College*, pp. 74ff.

[44]Walter E. Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830-1870*, p. 126.

[45]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. xxviii.

[46]Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 283.

[47]Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 804.

Furnivall in 1859 while on a geological walk at Caterham about the absence of the society of "pure and good women," the fortnightly excursions, whether walking or rowing,[48] included women. "Boat loads pulling up the river between Kingston and Hampton, beer and lemonade and pies under the trees, a pitch on the fern near Bushey, tea on cottage lawns, and a long walk home through the woods or across the fields to the stations for the train back to London, became the oft repeated details of the Sunday excursions."[49] The men and women of Litchfield's Singing Class later joined the excursions and, according to Furnivall, "brought those who took part in them more closely together than anything else."[50]

Furnivall's attitude toward women was fiercely democratic, and he always insisted that "women should share the work, games, and happiness of the men."[51] Unlike many other Victorian males, he had no reservations about women's total emancipation in politics, education, and social life, and he continued throughout his life to voice his opinions on the matter at every available opportunity. That women were not permitted to become members of the college and attend classes remained a source of frustration for him and, of course, another reason for strained relations with Maurice. As a keen advocate of woman suffrage he never gave up fighting for the official admission of women to the college, and he urged the authorities of the Salford Working Men's College at its inauguration to open its doors to women.[52] As late as December 18, 1909, Furnivall told the Old Students' Supper gathering that he thought it "a great pity that girls were not allowed to participate in the benefits to be derived at the College and he hoped that one day the classes would be open to them; they ought to have equal chances with the men."[53] At the council

[48]Furnivall wrote in *Early History of the Working Men's College*, p. 57: "We had, I think, three successive Rowing Clubs at intervals, of all of which I was president. I forget how many Cricket and Chess Clubs there were."

[49]Harrison, *A History of the Working Men's College*, p. 76.

[50]Furnivall, *Early History of the Working Men's College*, p. 56.

[51]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. xxviii.

[52]Ibid.

[53]Reported in *Working Men's College Journal*, February, 1910, p. 265. Perhaps rather appropriately, at the end of Furnivall's speech, "Mr. S. de Jastrzebski sang with charm, 'Bonnie Mary of Argyle.' " Ibid.

meeting on May 18, 1910, Vice-Principal John Crawley moved that "ladies be admitted as members of the Elocution classes." The motion was seconded by Furnivall, who had come especially for that purpose, but after a short discussion it was defeated by eight votes to six.[54] Furnivall was waging a useless war. As recently as 1951, when the issue was debated in council once again, the matter was settled by a motion: "Mr. Chairman, I think we ought to have women, but I move that we don't," which was carried by a huge majority.[55] Women were finally admitted as full members of the college in 1966.

The coeducational plan adopted at the Sheffield People's College never really recommended itself to Maurice.[56] Like Furnivall, John Roebuck, a married student at the college, argued in favor of mixed classes, and there was probably a good reason for this: in the *Working Men's College Magazine* one student's wife complained that her husband's learned conversation was becoming more and more unintelligible and that when he brought home friends from the college they talked about things she could not understand. Another wife complained that, if the wives asked questions, "we heard about Algebra, Shakespeare, or Red Sandstone."[57] The enterprising Roebuck obviously tried to make domestic amends, for Ludlow in his autobiography tells how, having taken up the study of geometry, Roebuck worked out theorems on the floor of his room using his wife and child as points *A* and *B*.

Furnivall concludes his account of "The Social Life of the College" in his *Early History of the Working Men's College:* "We studied and took exercise together, we were comrades and friends, and helpt one another to live higher, happier and healthier lives, free from all stupid and narrow class humbug."[58] The principle apparently succeeded very well. As Munro observes:

[54] *Working Men's College Journal*, June, 1910, p. 334.

[55] Harrison, *A History of the Working Men's College*, p. 110.

[56] See M. E. Sadler, *Continuation Schools in England and Elsewhere*, p. 41.

[57] *Working Men's College Magazine*, October, 1859, p. 153; December, 1859, pp. 181–84; October, 1859, pp. 162–64.

[58] Furnivall, *Early History of the Working Men's College*, p. 60. Furnivall was president of the Furnivall Cycling Club, founded in 1886. He presided at its fifteenth annual meeting in May, 1910, only a few weeks before he died.

> Surely no band of men heterogeneous as the members of that band were in characters, abilities, and occupations, was ever knit faster by mutual esteem and mutual helpfulness. While so many were steeped in the bookish theoric of cooperation and fellow-work, Furnivall and his fellows were striving to weave these things into their lives.[59]

An excellent opportunity for camaraderie and patriotism presented itself in 1859, with the founding of the Volunteer Movement, a grand Victorian patriotic gesture to meet the unlikely threat of invasion by Emperor Napoleon III. "Where," said Litchfield, "are there to be found this coming million of deadly marksmen that are to line every hedgerow between Kennington Common and Pevensey Bay, before the first thousand of invaders have formed upon the beach?"[60] The Working Men's College answered the call to arms. A corps was formed after much War Office red tape, which Litchfield claimed was due to the government's fear of arming the Socialists. Within a week the college garden had become a drill square, and drills were held in the evenings by gaslight. Furnivall was a member of the committee of the corps and later became company commander.

Since the social life of the college was crucial to its existence as a college and not as a mere night school and was responsible for developing the corporate life upon which the founders laid so much stress, it is hard to overestimate the value of Furnivall's social and recreational activities. Unfortunately, these activities did not always meet with the approval of the college authorities. For instance, fashionable and healthy as the Sunday excursions may have been, the fact that they were held on Sundays—and that women were encouraged to participate—was of particular concern to Maurice, who published his views in *The Sabbath Day: An Address to the Members of the Working Men's College.* He would gladly join people for a Sunday walk before divine service, he wrote, but would have nothing to do with the serious business of geology and entomology on that day. Maurice had an almost pathological fear of notoriety and public opinion and maintained standards of religion by lecturing on the New Testament and Christian ethics at eight o'clock every Sunday morning.

[59]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. xxv.

[60]Ibid., p. xxxix.

In 1858, the *People's Paper,* the secularist Sunday League publication, came out with reports of college excursions and meetings. The issue for August 7, 1858, had an unsigned paragraph by Furnivall describing a meeting of college students,[61] at which Maurice was not present, when a decision had apparently been taken to join the league. This crisis produced a pamphlet from Maurice, *Statement of My Reasons for Resigning the Office of Principal to the Working Men's College.* Maurice saw all this as an attempt by Furnivall to associate the college with the Sunday League "by a side wind." He wrote to condemn Furnivall's lack of modesty and to state that the meaning he was forced to put on the offensive paragraph was, "We do not bite our thumbs at you, Sir, but we do bite our thumbs."[62] Hughes and Ludlow managed to persuade Maurice not to resign, and the matter was eventually resolved. Furnivall's conduct in the matter was, however, to say the least reprehensible. In the *People's Paper* he voiced his favorite contention that Ludlow (who apparently preferred to remain an *eminence grise*) was the real founder of the college,[63] and he referred to a letter from Maurice in the following terms: "Mr. Ludlow then read to us a letter which Mr. Maurice had sent to Mr. Thrower, in which he took shame to himself for hitherto causing the failure of his classes through want of preparation, etc., and promised to try and do better for the future."

According to Munro, there never had been any intention of joining the Sunday League, but the fact of Furnivall's provocation surely remains. Throughout his career Furnivall found it difficult to conform to rules or restrictions of any kind. Discretion and reticence were foreign to him, especially if he was opposed or contradicted. Even

[61]According to Furnivall, the gathering was particularly democratic, and the students no longer regarded their instructors as "swells" but considered them friends. Masterman, *Ludlow*, p. 168. Furnivall sent copies of the *People's Paper* to all and sundry. See Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MSS FU 575, FU 576, FU 770.

[62]Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 574, letter, August 11, 1858.

[63]Furnivall never relinquished this claim. At the Old Student's Supper in 1908 he reminded the gathering of "the part that John Malcolm Ludlow played in helping to found the College and rallying men round Maurice . . . in starting the classes in Castle Street and insisting on the need of better education for working men." A strongly worded rebuttal of an earlier statement by Furnivall regarding Ludlow's founding of the college and the election of the first student members to the college council is found in a letter from Ludlow to the editor, *Working Men's College Journal*, May, 1895, p. 225.

Munro admits that "Furnivall's outspokenness, his determination to follow his own bent and his own conception of right, proved a source of embarassment to his fellow members on the College Council."[64] Certainly the image of the sometimes vicious assailant of Maurice and later Swinburne is very much at odds with that of Father Christmas distributing gifts among the poor children of Hammersmith. Ludlow, whom Furnivall still admired, was determined not to let Furnivall and "the Furnivall spirit" take possession of the college; he knew how powerful the latter had become. "He *is* practically the college for all daily details and deserves to be, for he looks after them," he wrote to Maurice, commenting that there was no need to get rid of Furnivall: "We shall keep him and make him useful."[65] Ludlow was well aware of Furnivall's admiration and knew how to handle him, but he admitted that "some pivot of resistance had to be organised" before Furnivall could be "fought."[66] Harrison writes of Furnivall:

> He was a man of violent temper and fierce tongue; vigorous, quite without tact, and unconventional in his habits and attitudes. . . . He became increasingly antagonistic to Maurice, with whom he differed on important aspects of College work. . . . And yet he remained an active member of the College, gave it a lifetime of most valuable service, collected around him a whole generation of devoted students.[67]

Of course, Maurice tended to bring out the worst in Furnivall. The formal, strict, often stuffy college principal and the jovial, bustling, impetuous teacher lived in different worlds. Maurice was the authority who stood firmly between Furnivall and the realization of some of his fondest democratic dreams.

Furnivall's antagonism toward Maurice soon appeared again, this time in connection with the college dances. Early signs of trouble appear in the following letter from Maurice replying to Furnivall's request to hold one of his dances: "I am sorry to be an obstruction but I think, on the whole, a dance would not be desirable on Wednesday

[64]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. xxix.

[65]Masterman, *Ludlow*, p. 169.

[66]Ibid.

[67]Harrison, *A History of the Working Men's College*, p. 39.

night. There are some who would be annoyed by it & who would be alienated by it from the College."[68]

During the winter of 1859, a series of four college dances at Salter's Hall, off Snow Hill, were substituted for the successful summer activities, the first dance being held in October. They were promoted chiefly and managed entirely by Furnivall, and so they were really official college events. Furnivall obviously sent out his usual circulars to publicize his dances; a letter from Elizabeth Malleson, St. John's Wood, dated October 9, 1859, reads: "It has given me a great deal of pleasure to see yr. circular of the 'Four Dances.' The place has our most hearty sympathy—it is so right & good that working men & women sh$^{d}$. have pleasant intercourse together."[69] In January 1861, however, by which time nine dances in all had been held, Litchfield published an article, entitled "Heads and Heels," in which he objected to the continuation of the dances. Ludlow also felt that it was neither rational nor decent for the college to be amusing itself with "wreaths and white waistcoats," and during discussions that followed in the college council "the dances were condemned in a resolution on which there was only one dissentient vote—Furnivall's."[70]

Of course, Furnivall did not let the matter rest there. He issued his own defense, and some students stood by him. Writing in February, 1861, he charged that one student friend had bitterly complained about the failure of the college to provide "the society of pure and good women" for those students "who know no families in London."[71] The squabbling finally died down and Furnivall continued with his teaching.

This affair demonstrates again that, although he was a democrat, Furnivall was not invariably democratic; he was stubborn and willful if he thought that he was right and the rest of the world was wrong. There is no doubt that Munro's concluding statement about the

[68]Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 582, letter, June 14, 1859.

[69]Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 543.

[70]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. xxxvii. For accounts of Maurice's opposition to the dances, see *Working Men's College Magazine*, January, 1861, pp. 1ff.; 20ff.; 36ff. For a description of a council meeting on the dance question, see Derek Hudson, *Arthur J. Munby: Man of Two Worlds*, p. 90.

[71]Munro, *Furnivall*, pp. xxxvii-xxxviii.

"heads and heels" episode is perfectly correct: "He [Furnivall] always succeeded best as an adventurer, proceeding by his own initiative, and unimpeded by the discretion and the reticence of more reflective and calculating minds."[72]

The storm that greeted Charles Darwin's hypothesis in 1859 did not escape Furnivall's notice, and, according to Munro, in the course of his work Furnivall found influences that caused him to revise his concept of Christian faith and to turn toward agnosticism. "Teaching, discussion and argument with men whose experience had been so different from his own forced him to consider himself introspectively, and the faith in which he had worshipped. [*On*] *The Origin of Species* was published in 1859, [Herbert] Spencer's *First Principles* in 1862, and [Thomas H.] Huxley's [*Zoological Evidences of*] *Man's Place in Nature* in 1863; the storm of dispute which followed the enouncement [*sic*] of the Darwinian hypothesis did not leave Furnivall untouched."[73]

Munro adds that "other influences, not to be detected by the divining-rod of research," were doubtless responsible for the change,[74] but surely Furnivall's agnosticism was inevitable. The "shy Evangelical" was now a rigorous freethinker in search of truth—social, scientific, literary, and moral. It would have been out of character for the radical, independent Furnivall to quietly accept the orthodox religious view while challenging institutions of almost every other sort.

Throughout this period Furnivall was in touch with such unorthodox luminaries as Thomas Carlyle, John Stuart Mill, George Eliot, George Holyoake, and John Morley and was conversant with the work of the German rationalists, biblical criticism, and the publications of Sir Charles Lyell, Huxley, and Spencer. Indeed, on November 24, 1856, Furnivall received the following letter from Huxley:

> I imagine a difficulty. Brought up in the Church I am no Churchman—the meaning of the word "believe" varies *so* greatly to different men, that I am hardly inclined to profess myself one. . . . What I have striven to do all my life is to avoid lying in word or deed, and therefore to keep silence upon these

[72]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. xxxviii.

[73]Ibid., p. xxxii.

[74]Ibid.

> matters on which my mind has no clear vision. Will you ascertain for me whether what I have said is consistent or inconsistent with the understanding upon which an honest man could become a Professor at Oxford? If it is, I will go in for the Chair at once, if not I must give up all thought of it.[75]

Another letter from Huxley, dated December 1, 1856, reads, "By the way it just occurs to me that you may be interested in the views contained in a little pamphlet"[76] and in yet another letter, on February 23, 1857, he refers to a lecture he gave at the Working Men's College, obviously at Furnivall's invitation:

> I am very much obliged to you for letting me know of any way in which I *can* aid the Working Men's College. My audience stuck to me from beginning to end—and they shewed an amount of attention and comprehension which I have rarely met with. "Natural History as an Instrument of Education" will do very well for a title.[77]

As early as 1851, Furnivall was nagging Ruskin about the authority of Scripture and the "equivocation between Authority and Belief." A letter from Ruskin on March 17, 1851, ends:

> The rest of your note refers to the endless question of authority of Scripture, into which it is vain to enter. I say only this—if the Bible does not speak plain English enough to define the articles of saving faith, burn it, and write another—but don't talk of *interpreting* it. I will keep your note to talk it over with you.[78]

Doubt and disquiet were in the air, and Furnivall, full of the spirit of inquiry, found like many other Victorians that his beliefs were no longer secure and that old certainties were certainties no longer.[79] Furnivall's love of discussion, debate, and inquiry in his student days at University College and Cambridge was a Victorian trait, but in him it came to amount almost to a passion. His relentless questioning is present not only in his correspondence with Ruskin but also in accounts of his meetings with various friends in London. In Derek

[75]Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 429.

[76]Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 430.

[77]Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 431.

[78]W. Robertson Nicoll and Thomas J. Wise, eds., *Literary Anecdotes of the Nineteenth Century*, pp. 45–46.

[79]Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind*, p. 13.

Hudson's *The Life and Diaries of Arthur J. Munby, 1828-1910,* the diary entry for Thursday, March 3, 1859, reads:

> Went to MacMillan's afterwards, & found him with Litchfield, Furnivall & Vernon Lushington discussing one of those College jars which *will* occur: how Furnivall wants to read Mill on Liberty with his class & Maurice objects to it as a contemporary book on an unsettled question. F. will kick, but Maurice will conquer; for all submit to him, not because he is *Principal* but because he is *Maurice*. . . . Then the talk grew towards Genesis and Geology: Macmillan holding that Maurice had fully explained Chap. I—Litchfield & Furnivall laughing to scorn (though with full recognition of Maurice's greatness) his or any, reconcilement.[80]

Furnivall's antisabbatarian activities and his botanical, geological, and archaeological excursions with college students and friends were, of course, signs that he had passed from Maurice's influence and of his developing agnosticism, which Maurice must have recognized. Owen Chadwick's description, in *The Victorian Church,* of Victorians who reacted against "puritanism" and wanted "to break through the vigorous conventions of the Victorian middle class" and "throw off restraints upon gaiety" is particularly applicable to Furnivall:

> . . . the whole question of belief or unbelief was so common in public discussion as to force the minds of the educated young . . . to find a faith for themselves, and no longer to inherit serenely the faith of their parents. . . . The younger generations wanted to relax the restraints of their elders about theatres, dancing, Sunday and marriage. Even a man of mild religion like Matthew Arnold considered that the young thought of the religious world as "sombre" or "narrow."[81]

Furnivall eventually abandoned the religious basis of his social undertakings[82] and stopped devoting his Sundays to the Scriptures and the inscription of sermon books, as Maurice had encouraged. In a letter to Furnivall in 1860, college cofounder Tom Hughes declines an invitation to be present at a meeting with Christian-turned-rationalist George Holyoake and his friends, "because I have to dis-

[80]Derek Hudson, ed., *The Life and Diaries of Arthur J. Munby, 1828-1910*, p. 26.

[81]Owen Chadwick, *The Victorian Church*, 2:112, 117-18.

[82]As a young man he wrote *Association: A Necessary Part of Christianity*. See Thomas J. Wise, *Letters from John Ruskin to Frederick J. Furnivall*, pp. 3-13.

sent very strongly with their views."[83] Holyoake, who had been, he said, "delivered by reason alone from the prison-house in which I had dwelt with its many terrors" into a new "land of self-effort and improvement,"[84] remained a friend of Furnivall's, as a letter of greeting in 1870 indicates.[85] George Radford suggests that Furnivall also, like Dr. Johnson, "applied to religion 'an obstinate rationality,' and while the process left Johnson 'an unshaken Church of England man,' it made Furnivall an Agnostic."[86]

After 1872, when Maurice died, the London Working Men's College entered a new phase, and during the succeeding years, which saw the arrival at the college of University Extension lectures and Tutorial classes, Furnivall became less and less closely involved in the academic affairs of the institution, though he was listed in the college calendar as an examiner in English language and literature until he died.[87] Younger men were beginning to run the college, however, and Furnivall's many other schemes and interests made it impossible for him to spend much time in Great Ormond Street. By the mid-1870s, although the major part of his work for the Philological Society's *New English Dictionary* was completed, he was deeply involved in the activities of the Early English Text Society, the Ballad Society, the Chaucer Society, and the New Shakspere Society. In the 1880s he had the work of two further societies, the Browning Society and the Shelley Society.

Some of his correspondence of these years demonstrates how the pressures of events disrupted his previously accepted college duties. In a letter to H. R. Jennings, secretary of the college, on November 24, 1896, Furnivall writes, "Our opening Browning Meeting of this session at which I *must* be present has been long fixt for tonight; otherwise I wd have come to the Council."[88] On March 31 of the

[83]Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 399.

[84]See Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind*, p. 51.

[85]Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 392.

[86]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. 160.

[87]See *Calendar of the Working Men's College, London, 1909-1910*, p. 4. In a letter to George Tansley, Furnivall writes: "Dalziel passes easily in Grammar. He has done all the Paper, with one omission & one mistake." Working Men's College Library, Furnivall Correspondence, Letter no. 9, n.d. This is presumably a reference to W. A. Dalziel, Furnivall's brother-in-law, who became secretary of the Early English Text Society.

[88]Working Men's College Library, Furnivall Correspondence, letter no. 36, n.d.

following year he writes to Jennings: "Sat$^{y}$ is Race Day. We have a great gathering of folks at our Girls' Sculling Club at Hammersmith, & Dancing and Singing in the evening. I cannot get away to take the Chair at the College."[89] Typically, Furnivall sometimes had more personal reasons for refusing to perform his college duties: "I'm sorry that I can't take the Chair for Hales on the 24th. Years ago I had to cut him, & have had nothing to do with him since."[90] Former foes were seldom, if ever, forgiven. J. W. Hales had been one of several prominent scholars who had withdrawn from the New Shakspere Society because of Furnivall's conduct in the bitter controversy with Swinburne (see chapter 6).

Yet there was never any question of Furnivall's forsaking the Working Men's College during the later, more illustrious period of his career. He continued until the end to support it and to promote the study of English language and literature among the students whenever time allowed him to. In a letter to Jennings on November 5, 1894, he writes, "If your Lib$^{n}$ wd. like the public$^{tions}$ of the Early English Text, Chaucer & New Shaksp. Socs. . . . he can have em if he likes; but they're all unbound, & they run to 200 vols. or so."[91] A follow-up letter on November 22 reads: "I enclose you a list of the E.E.T. Soc. books. If there isn't enough for Mr. Levinsohn, he can see most of the books here, 3 St. George's Sq. N.W. any morning before 12, or any ev$^{g}$ after 9, when I get home from the Brit. Mus."[92] On December 8, 1890, he wrote to Jennings: "Yes, I sent the 3 Browning books. If the 1/- Selections from R.B. & his wife, E.B.B. are not in the Library, will you buy 'em & ask me for the 1/6 next time we meet—at the Dinner on the 20th."[93]

In addition to making texts available to students, Furnivall was also eager to supplement the college lectures with literary papers from outside. On July 8, 1884, he writes to the secretary: "If you'll take a Sat$^{y}$ ev$^{g}$ lecture from a lady next Dec$^{r}$ a very handsome & clever

[89]Working Men's College Library, Furnivall Correspondence, letter no. 38, n.d.

[90]Working Men's College Library, Furnivall Correspondence, letter no. 34, November 14, 1896.

[91]Working Men's College Library, Furnivall Correspondence, letter no. 29, n.d.

[92]Working Men's College Library, Furnivall Correspondence, letter no. 30, n.d.

[93]Working Men's College Library, Furnivall Correspondence, letter no. 27, n.d.

friend of mine, 21 or so, who recites splendidly, 'll [sic] give you a Lecture on a poet, say Browning, or Shakspere, or on Art. She is one of the possibly, 3 or 4 handsomest brunettes in London: rich too."[94] And on January 3, 1890: "Yes, I'll take the Chair for Churton Collins on Feb. 22. . . . If 29 March is not filled up, my friend Mrs. Ireland w*d* give you a lecture on J. W. Carlyle or Rob*t* Browning if you like."[95] Furnivall himself lectured on "Life in Early England" on November 18, 1905, and again on January 27, 1906.

One of the strongest societies at the college was the College Shakespeare Readers or the Shakespeare Reading Society, which met regularly every other Sunday. John Roebuck recalls that the club "was formed in the early days of the College. . . . The readers were 'cast' for their parts, and after the reading, discussion of the play ensued."[96] In 1874, Furnivall tried to persuade readers of the London *Daily News* that, to offset the boredom of dull dinner parties, husbands and wives should read Shakespeare's plays together—in chronological order, of course. He writes:

> I belong to two such Shakspere Reading Clubs—one connected with my Chaucer Class at the Working Men's College which meets on alternate Sunday evenings at the house of one of our married students, . . . the other . . . meets on alternate Wednesday evenings at the house of each member of the party in succession.[97]

The *Daily News* editor, replying to Furnivall's rather unusual proposal, suggests that "the spectacle of . . .some squire's wife being called upon to criticize Goethe's theory of Hamlet, as that is found in Wilhelm Meister, might be a little ludicrous" but gives general approval to Furnivall's plan.[98]

Furnivall's connection with University Extension programs was peripheral, because by the 1800s he was principally occupied with his literary societies and other ventures. He was not, however, uninterested in or unaware of the work being done in that area of adult

[94]Working Men's College Library, Furnivall Correspondence, letter no. 22, n.d.

[95]Working Men's College Library, Furnivall Correspondence, letter no. 26, n.d.

[96]Davies, *The Working Men's College*, pp. 92-93.

[97]*London Daily News*, December 30, 1874, p. 2.

[98]Ibid, p. 5.

education. Before R. G. Moulton left for Chicago in 1894, Furnivall was one of the many who paid tribute to his great talent as an English lecturer and his massive contribution to the Extension movement during fifteen years of teaching in England.[99]

In 1875, Furnivall gave a course of lectures on Elizabethan literature at the Bedford Institute. All his handwritten lecture notes for this course, conducted from February to April, are in the King's College Library, London. They make up six lectures, under the headings (1) "A Sketch of English Literature to the Accession of Elizabeth," (2) "Fresh Writers (Mainly Non-Dramatic) in Possession of the Field When Shakspere Came to London, Probably About 1585-6 . . . ," (3) "Rapid Rise of Drama . . . ,"Norton, Green, Peele, Marlowe, etc. (4) Shakespeare, (5) Shakespeare's Contemporaries, Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, Chapman, Webster, etc., (6) Contemporaries and Successors to Shakespeare in Prose—Bacon, Hooker, Raleigh, etc.

Describing the founding of the Elizabethan Society at Toynbee Hall (the first University Settlement) on March 8, 1884, Frederick Rogers, secretary of the National Committee of Organised Labour, writes:

> We met every week to read the works of Christopher Marlowe, and were about a dozen in number, working-class and middle-class lads combined . . . .In December, 1889 Robert Browning died. . . . Dr. F. J. Furnivall, the distinguished English scholar wrote to us, suggesting that the moment was opportune for obtaining from his [Browning's] son or his publishers a shilling selection of his poems for popular circulation. The Elizabethan Society set to work.[100]

The last educational organization with which Furnivall was affiliated before his death in 1910 was the English Association, inaugurated at University College, London, in January, 1907.[101] Despite the possibility that it would impinge on the activities of his own societies, Furnivall gave "help and encouragement" to the Association,[102] according to T. Gregory Foster, provost of University College and chair-

[99]See W. F. Moulton, *Richard Green Moulton*, p. 31.

[100]Frederick Rogers, *Labour Life and Literature*, pp. 159, 167.

[101]See *Academy*, January, 1907, p. 71.

[102]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. 59.

man of the English Association Committee. Furnivall's support is again referred to later in the issue of *English Association Bulletin* recording his death: "When the Association was founded, he [Furnivall] came forward at once to support it, spoke at the opening meeting, and received such honour as it was in our power to offer him by becoming one of our first Vice-Presidents."[103]

Although after 1872 Furnivall was less closely involved in the academic affairs of the Working Men's College, his participation in its social affairs significantly remained as active as ever. As one of the college founders, Furnivall invariably attended the annual Old Students' Supper. His speeches on these occasions, as on others, were always racy, salty, and unconventional. The authorities squirmed, but the students looked forward to that moment during the evening when the Doctor got up to speak. J. C. Castell and C. F. W. Mead write:

> Two subjects there were on which it was always possible to "draw" the Doctor. He never made an after-dinner speech but that somehow or other there came a slashing reference to the House of Lords; and he was a fearless and enthusiastic advocate of woman suffrage. His ardent democracy could tolerate nothing short of adult suffrage; and those who suggested the exclusion of a sex fared as ill at his hands as those who would shut out any class from the rights of citizenship.[104]

However unconventional and inappropriate his speeches (he once compared critically the poetry of Browning and Tennyson to the National Amateur Rowing Association), and however wide-ranging and diversified his many schemes and projects, they were all motivated by his deep desire to help bring about the improvement and advancement of human society. Furnivall's work in the literary world of poets, scholars, editors, and lexicographers may appear to be far removed from his activities as pioneer, social worker, and English teacher in the London Working Men's College, but his literary pursuits in the Philological Society, the Early English Text Society, and other societies were inspired by the same desire for social reform that tied Furnivall throughout his career to the Working Men's College and all it stood for.

[103]*English Association Bulletin*, October, 1910, p. 5.

[104]Munro, *Furnivall*, pp. 21-22.

In literature, especially literature from a noble past, Furnivall found those human, social, and moral values that he tried to practice and encourage among his working-class students and friends. Thus his natural desire was to reclaim and make available to everyone, through editing and printing, as many of these literary treasures as possible. Since philology is a field of study that sheds light on cultural history, and since the *New English Dictionary* was to become "the history of a people in terms of its language," it is not surprising that Furnivall had become one of the most active members of the London Philological Society in the early 1850s, when the London Working Men's College was being established.

CHAPTER 4

# Philologist and Lexicographer

LONG BEFORE the London Philological Society was founded, early-nineteenth-century book clubs and publishing societies were preparing the way for the society's printing projects and, later, those of the Early English Text Society. By 1800 the reprinting of old literature was increasing rapidly, and a wave of bibliomania, an indirect result of the revival of interest in medievalism, alerted a public already fascinated by the charms of romantic literature to the existence of vast stores of manuscripts and materials of an older English literature reputed to be of unimagined value and interest. Bibliophiles set about collecting and publishing original literary documents, and their example was later followed by enthusiasts in other fields such as history, biography, architecture, music, and ecclesiology.[1]

Societies and book clubs sprang up among these book collectors, and even government projects, such as the Rolls Series, for which Furnivall undertook to edit a text in 1860, were the direct result of their activities. The Roxburghe Club, for which Furnivall edited the *Seynt Graal* in 1861–63 and the *Handlyng Synne* of Robert of Brunne, with the *Manuel des Pechiez* of William Waddington in 1862, was the pioneer of these organizations, having among its members such scholars as Sir Frederic Madden, Sir Henry Ellis, Aldis Wright, J. P. Collier, and Israel Gollancz. The importance of the Roxburghe and other book clubs like it was, however, seriously di-

[1]H. R. Steeves, *Learned Societies and English Literary Scholarship*, p. 99.

minished by their insistence on supplying the issues of their publications only to their exclusive membership.[2] Apart from the Roxburghe Club, the relative inferiority of these early book clubs[3] for other than social purposes was later demonstrated by the practical value of the publishing societies such as the Surtees Society, the Camden Society, and the Early English Text Society. Only the later Hunterian Club (1871), for which Furnivall also edited texts, made any attempt to restore some of the precious, dilettante bookishness of the book clubs.

It is true that the first of the important publishing societies, the Surtees Society (founded in 1834), had a limited scope:

> . . . the publishing [of] such inedited manuscripts as illustrate the intellectual, the moral, the religious, and the social condition of those parts of England and Scotland, included on the east, between the Humber and the Firth of Forth, and on the west between the Mersey and the Clyde, from the earliest period to the time of Restoration.[4]

Nevertheless, its contribution to English literature is seen in some of its publications in other fields: the *Towneley Mysteries,* the two-volume *Anglo-Saxon and Early English Psalters,* the Durham Anglo-Saxon ritual, and a metrical *Life of St. Cuthbert.*[5] The purpose of the Camden Society, founded in 1838, was "to perpetuate, and render accessible, whatever is valuable, but at present little known, amongst the materials for the civil, ecclesiastical, or literary history of the United Kingdom," and although it started publication on a large scale, popular interest dwindled, possibly because of the founding of the Parker, Percy, and Shakespeare societies in 1840.[6] Still, the society's volume of Arthurian romances in 1842, the *Promptorium Parvulorum, The Thornton Romances, The Peterborough*

[2]*Gentleman's Magazine*, August, 1813, pp. 211–12.

[3]For a detailed history of the early book clubs see Steeves, *Learned Societies*, pp. 108–16. Walter W. Skeat writes: "The sumptuous editions for the Maitland and Roxburghe Clubs were beyond the means of students; and it has lately been ascertained that some of the editors were not remarkable for any close acquaintance with their subjects." Walter W. Skeat, *A Student's Pastime*, p. xxii.

[4]Steeves, *Learned Societies*, pp. 121–22.

[5]Ibid.

[6]See F. J. Levy, "The Founding of the Camden Society," *Victorian Studies* 7 (1963–64): 295–305.

*Chronicle, The Ancren Riwle,* the *Milton Papers,* diaries, miscellaneous poems, and other materials were of great value to students of literature. Moreover, the Camden and other societies and book clubs provided important examples for later publishing societies. For instance, Furnivall owed something to his early experience, however limited, of the Roxburghe Club and to the practice of early clubs and societies in the formation of his own Early English Text Society. H. R. Steeves sums up his detailed account of these and other book clubs and publishing societies, which were the important forerunners of the Philological Society and the Early English Text Society:

> The history of English societies for literary scholarship divides itself into two definitely marked periods. The first of these was contemporary with the effervescence of publishing society activities in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, apparently influenced by the success of the small and exclusive book clubs. The second period opened with Frederic [sic] J. Furnivall's establishment of the Early English Text Society in 1864, when a wholly new scholarly tradition, derived in large part from Germany, not only gave societies once more an excuse for existing, but made them indispensable as an agency for the effective realization of the rapidly expanding aims of contemporary scholarship.[7]

To understand this "wholly new scholarly tradition" with which most of the famous Victorian scholars of English were associated, and the work of the founder of the Early English Text Society which inaugurated the second period of nineteenth-century literary societies, it is necessary to look at what was going on in University College, London, and to examine Furnivall's association with the college both as a student of mathematics and classics and as joint secretary of the Philological Society during the 1840s and 1850s.

The new scholarly tradition from which Furnivall sprang was centered in University College, and it was his invaluable dictionary that led him to found his Early English Text Society. Furnivall served his "apprenticeship" as a philologist and editor in the college during a period when the exciting new scientific philology imported from the

[7]Steeves, *Learned Societies*, p. 138. See also Arthur Brown, "The Growth of Literary Societies," in *Librarianship and Literature*, ed. A. T. Milne, pp. 93–96; Joseph E. Baker, ed., *The Reinterpretation of Victorian Literature*, pp. 138–39.

Continent was generating serious research, exact scholarship, and scientific inquiry, all infused with vigorous Victorian optimism and patriotism. It was in the college that he became familiar with the apparatus of philology, which was to provide a key to the glorious hidden past of England's noble ancestors.

When Furnivall entered University College as a student in 1841, startling new discoveries had, of course, already been made on the Continent in the comparative study of languages. In the 1820s, Jacob Grimm, Franz Bopp, and Rasmus Rask had laid the foundations of a new science of language, following the hint of Sir William Jones in his famous statement: "Sanscrit, Greek, and Latin must have all 'sprung from some common source, which, perhaps, no longer exists.'"[8] Their principal discovery—that "the changes by which the languages had become differentiated from each other were not mere accidental and unaccountable corruptions, but that they took place according to certain fixed rules, and that these rules could be stated"[9]—was brought, with other discoveries, to England by their disciples Friedrich Rosen, John Kemble, and Benjamin Thorpe. Rosen was Bopp's disciple, and Kemble studied under Grimm in Germany. Along with Benjamin Thorpe, who had studied under Rask in Copenhagen, Kemble introduced the new methods of comparative philology into the teaching of Anglo-Saxon[10] and expressed his expectation that University College would study Anglo-Saxon philology from "such an excellent textbook as Thorpe's *Analecta*, in honourable contradistinction to the antiquated methods of Oxford."[11]

Rosen, meanwhile, had introduced his colleagues in the classics T. H. Key, George Long, and Henry Malden to the mysteries of the new philology. When he was given the chair of Sanskrit in 1834, Key and Long attended his classes, and, according to H. Hale Bellot, both "owed a great debt to him in their application of comparative philol-

[8]R. W. Chambers, *Man's Unconquerable Mind*, p. 344.

[9]Ibid., p. 345

[10]See John Petheram, *An Historical Sketch of the Progress and Present State of Anglo-Saxon Literature in England*, pp. 141-42.

[11]Chambers, *Man's Unconquerable Mind*, p. 347. See G. P. Gooch, *History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 271.

ogy to the teaching of the classical languages."[12] In 1842, Key became professor of comparative grammar (philology), the first chair of its kind in England, and held that post until his death in 1875. The chair of Latin, relinquished by Key, was taken by Long in 1842, and his Greek chair was given to Malden, who was Furnivall's Greek professor in 1841 and 1842. A writer in the *Spectator* (probably its editor, Richard Holt Hutton) described Malden as follows:

> He had in him something of the tenderness and something of the grace of a poet, with a minuteness of labourious accuracy, and a fidelity of philological zeal which sometimes drew away his mind from the poetical aspects of his great subjects to the fine dust oftener raised than laid by the Scholiasts . . . . Conscientious, delicate, precise, with something in him of the mathematician's as well as the scholar's sense of beauty, . . . Professor Malden would throw into his disquisitions on a corrupt chorus of the "Agamemnon" . . . as much labour and method as a statesman would devote to a public measure of high importance.[13]

There is no doubt that the impressionable young Furnivall acquired some of these qualities from Malden. Certainly he would have had to practice painstaking care in his submitted work: a notebook in the Furnivall Papers at King's College, London, is headed "Frederick James Furnivall's Translation of Homer's Odyssey, Books 10 and 11, with Prof. Malden, A.M., University College, London," and there is also a translation of *Antigone,* dated April 27, 1842.

During this early period of Furnivall's career when he was at University College (1841-42), at Cambridge (1842-46), and then in the chambers of Bellenden Ker at Lincoln's Inn Fields, his growing preoccupation with literary matters is clear. At Cambridge, where his subjects were classics and mathematics, his chief interest was rowing. He did not like Lincoln's Inn, but he had responded to the atmosphere of scholarly investigation created by the philologists at University College, and he readily entered into literary as well as political discussions with prominent writers like Ruskin, Carlyle, Mrs. Gaskell, and Kingsley, after being introduced to the Christian Socialist circle by

[12]H. Hale Bellot, *University College, London, 1826-1926*, p. 119. See also J. W. Donaldson, *The New Cratylus*, pp. 1-53.

[13]Bellot, *University College*, p. 93.

Ludlow in 1848. When Tennyson's *Morte d'Arthur,* the first specimen of *The Idylls of the King,* appeared in 1842, Furnivall, then only seventeen, read it carefully. Alois Brandl claims, "I have it on Furnivall's authority that this beautiful fragment, the true centre of the Arthurian epic, first kindled in him the flame of his enthusiasm for the older literature."[14] Brandl adds that, while law studies left the romantic young Furnivall unsatisfied, "he owed to his legal studies an intimate acquaintance not only with old customs and notions of law, but with the archives and the ways of scribes and copyists, which stood him in good stead later on."[15]

### *The London Philological Society*

Of course, the most important event in Furnivall's life during this period was his decision to become a member of the London Philological Society at University College in 1847, the year after he obtained his bachelor of arts degree from Cambridge and returned to London. Unfortunately, his diaries for the years during which he was acquiring a working knowledge of philology have not survived. Since much of his "apprenticeship" was almost certainly "served" in oral discussion and investigation, his correspondence does not fill the gap in the record created by the absent diaries. A letter to Furnivall from Benjamin Thorpe, however, illustrates the former's readiness to consult distinguished scholars on any philological question about which he was curious:

> My etymological knowledge is of the slightest but as far as it enables me to judge what Mr. Ludlow says about "vavasour" appears to me very satisfactory about the point. I feel flattered by the terms in which you mention my Lappenberg and Beowulf. Of the former Mr. Russell Smith is on the eve of publishing the 3rd vol. containing the Norman Kings, which I hope you will think well of.[16]

Other correspondence shows by the complexity of the subject matter how, although he was never a fully trained philologist, Furnivall gradually became recognized by the *cognoscenti* as one with

[14]Munro, *Frederick James Furnivall: A Volume of Personal Record*, p. 11.

[15]Ibid.

[16]British Library, Add. MS 43798, fol. 67, letter, March 9, 1857.

whom matters of textual criticism and editorial problems could be discussed. A letter to Furnivall from Key of about 1848 denounces an edition of *Genie de la fayre latrine* as "ludicrously wild and wrong" and provides a detailed analysis of it.[17] On January 9, 1855, Hensleigh Wedgwood writes to Furnivall at great length on the derivation of various words: ". . . with respect to 'join' I do not know of any further analysis of the notion, but the word is I believe common to all the Indo-European stock."[18] A letter to Furnivall from Theodor Aufrecht of June 14, 1857, refers to an attack the writer had made on a paper by Theodore Goldstücker: "My object was only to show in what blunders they are likely to fall who hope to master every language by the Sanskrit, without having taken the trouble to acquaint themselves with a little Greek and Latin."[19]

According to R. W. Chambers, the Philological Society had begun as a student society in University College soon after the college first opened. In 1842 it became "a national institution, instead of a university body. The three professors of University College—Latham, Key and Malden—remained prominent, but they associated with themselves any philologists living in London, Richard Garnett, the elder, Edwin Guest and others."[20] After Guest, master of Caius, Cambridge, called a meeting in May, 1842, "for the purpose of forming a Philological Society," the society was established for "the investigation of the structure, the affinities and the history of languages; and the philological illustration of the classical writers of Greece and Rome."[21] In 1878 the reference to classical philology was deleted, and although studies in the English field were at first almost eclipsed by classical studies, they later became the primary concern of the Philological Society, which came to be regarded by many outside the membership as the sole representative of English scholarship in Britain.

The Philological Society soon began publishing a periodical, the

[17]Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 211.

[18]Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 934.

[19]Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 10.

[20]R. W. Chambers, *Man's Unconquerable Mind*, p. 350.

[21]*Philological Society Proceedings*, June, 1846, Appendix, pp. i–iv. See also *Circular Dated May 9, 1842, Respecting the Formation of the [Philological] Society.*

*Proceedings* (later called *Transactions*), and Key, who became a leading member of the Philological Society, was a constant contributor. According to Robinson Ellis, Key did much to make the new philology popular, and his lectures "never failed to attract an interested and attentive audience."[22] When Furnivall joined the society in 1847, he was still studying law in Ker's chambers and, under Ludlow's influence, developing a deep interest in social affairs. In May, 1853, at the age of twenty-eight, he became joint secretary of the society with Key. At the annual meeting in 1862, when Key was made a vice-president, Furnivall, who had been doing practically all of the secretarial work for many years, was made the society's sole secretary, a post he held until three weeks before his death in 1910.[23] Francis Bickley writes:

> The last time I saw him was at a meeting of the Philological Society, three weeks before his death, when he resigned the secretaryship he had held so long. It was an unforgettable sight; to see this old man, who knew how near death was, listening to the paper with the zeal of one who had years of study still before him.[24]

The meetings of the society were held at University College, and Furnivall, who was in many respects the leading light of the society, was obviously regarded as something of an institution there by other members. T. Gregory Foster recalls:

> He was always at his best at the meetings of the Philological. There were first those wonderful minutes, written by his own hand, containing a faithful record of the proceedings of the previous meetings, with now and again a sly hint that often summarized his criticism of the paper at that meeting. His questions and criticism following the evening's paper generally stood out as the feature of the evening. . . . What can the Philological be without him? is the question that inevitably comes to one's mind.[25]

Over two hundred "original members" of the Philological Society are listed in the first issue of the *Proceedings,* among them such

[22]Bellot, *University College*, pp. 88–89. See also R. H. Hutton, ed., *Literary Studies*, 1:15.

[23]See *Philological Society Transactions, 1862–63*, p. 330.

[24]Munro, *Furnivall*, pp. 1–2.

[25]Ibid., p. 58. The minutes were recorded with the same precision that is seen in Furnivall's diary entries.

prominent names in English studies as Joseph Bosworth, Richard Garnett, Henry Hallam, John Mitchell Kemble, Benjamin Thorpe, and Richard Chenevix Trench. Records of the early meetings at University College contain papers on English dialects; Anglo-Saxon and Middle English grammar; place, animal, and plant names; and etymologies. They include, for example, Richard Garnett's paper "On the Languages and Dialects of the British Islands" (delivered on May 12, 1843),[26] Guest's "Certain Inflexions of the Old English Adjective" (March 10, 1843),[27] and Wedgwood's "On English Etymologies" (February 21, 1851).[28]

Furnivall, however, properly belongs with a later generation of scholars, those who joined the society about twenty or thirty years after its founding: Henry Benjamin Wheatley, Richard Morris, Alexander Ellis, and Henry Sweet began making their contributions in the 1860s, and Gilbert Murray and Walter W. Skeat in the 1870s. The arrival of these scholars gave a new impetus to the work of the society, and soon it was busy at various projects and schemes that were later to bring it great distinction, in particular the production of the colossal *New English Dictionary* (later called the *Oxford English Dictionary*), which would compare with the great German dictionary projected in 1838 by the Grimm brothers or that undertaken by Matthias de Vries and Lamerte Allard te Winkel in Holland in 1852. Furnivall himself presented a paper to the society on May 26, 1859, "On an Unregistered Sense of the Word *Thing* and Its Base *the*,"[29] and another on March 27, 1862, "An Account of Some Early English Poems." These poems were published the same year in a volume, *Early English Poems from Various Manuscripts,* in place of the usual *Transactions* of the society.[30] The volume contains various early "lives of saints," sermons, and such pieces as "Why I Cant Be a Nun," "Land of Cockaygne," and "A Song of Yesterday." The publication of

[26]*Philological Society Proceedings*, June, 1846, p. 91.

[27]Ibid., p. 65.

[28]*Philological Society Transactions*, 1858, pt. 1, pp. 1ff. The title was changed from *Proceedings* to *Transactions* in 1854.

[29]*Philological Society Transactions*, 1859, pp. 125–26.

[30]*Philological Society Transactions*, 1862–63, p. 328. "On the Legend of the St. Graal and Its History" was published by Herr Albert Schulz and Furnivall on March 14, 1862.

*Early English Poems* anticipates the founding of the Early English Text Society two years later, in 1864, as does a letter dated January 31, 1859, from Furnivall to Sir Frederic Madden, keeper of manuscripts at the British Museum:

> Can you tell me of any early English MS. (in London), before 1300 if possible which would take up from 100 to 150 octavo pages, and which we could print as Supplement to our Philological Society's Transactions. We shall have above 100 pages to spare this year, and I should like to make them available for some Early English matter.[31]

From this letter and the articles published by the Philological Society, it can be seen that the society was based on a native tradition: contrary to the impression given by the "founding statement," reports on European scholarship are relatively few, and for the first twenty years or so almost no work was done in non-English Germanic Philology.[32] This native bias was strengthened by the vigorous activities of Guest and Wedgwood and, of course, by Furnivall himself, whose interest since 1842 had centered on "the literature of our forefathers."

One interesting paper read to the society on February 22, 1850 was "On the Probable Future Position of the English Language," by Thomas Watts, keeper of printed books in the British Museum. Watts argued that, because the use of English had increased so much in the world over the last hundred years, and because it united "as no other language unites the Romanic and the Teutonic stocks," it might become the international language.[33] He went on to point out what a blessing that would be to religion and to literature. The entire article

[31]British Library, Eg. MS 2847, fol. 32. Madden replied on February 2, 1859: "I am not aware that you will find in any of the MSS in the London libraries a poem of the 13th century long enough to fill 100 pages." Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 534.

[32]The emphasis falls rather on the following categories: the investigation of the forms, dialects, and etymologies of English; the ethnologically oriented philology that turned to distant non-Indo-European languages, such as Latham's paper "On the Languages of the Papuan or Negrito Race Scattered Through the Australian and Other Asiatic Islands," given in February, 1843; and, during the early years, classical philology, as in Key's article "On the Etymology of Certain Latin Words," published in January, 1852. Generally speaking, for the first two decades of the society's existence, Key, Malden, and others concentrated on Greek and Latin subjects; Latham dealt with non-Indo-European subjects; and Hensleigh Wedgwood with Edwin Guest handled English subjects.

[33]*Philological Society Proceedings*, 4, (February, 1850): 212.

provided an appropriate foreword to the commencement a few years later of the *New English Dictionary* by the Philological Society.

### *The New English Dictionary*

The publication of the dictionary was first proposed in 1857 by Richard Chenevix Trench, Dean of Westminster Cathedral, a scholar of considerable standing.[34] He gave the study of philology intellectual vogue by a course of lectures he delivered at Winchester College in 1846 on "Language as an Instrument of Knowledge." The lectures were later expanded into *On the Study of Words,* published in 1851 to reach a wider audience.[35]

In 1854, Trench gave a similar course of lectures to the pupils of King's College School, London, and later that year at the Training School, Winchester. The lectures were published in 1855 as *English Past and Present,* which by 1889 had gone through fourteen editions. *On the Study of Words* had reached its nineteenth edition by 1886. The importance of these two publications for philology and the *New English Dictionary* is described by Hans Aarsleff in *The Study of Language in England, 1780-1860:* "Both books did far more than any previous publication to make language study popular, and without that popularity it seems unlikely that the *New English Dictionary* would have been able both to get the readers it needed and to arouse the general interest which sustained it."[36]

These books on the history of English words and the changes which the language has undergone demonstrate that the historical and patriotic character of Trench's concept of language and its study parallels Kingsley's, Maurice's, and Furnivall's view of literature as "the autobiography of a nation." Trench writes in an earlier book, *On the Study of Words*: ". . . language is a moral barometer which indi-

[34]Richard Chenevix Trench, *On The Study of Words* [*1851*] and *English Past and Present* [*1855*], rev. ed. p. 3.

[35]Trench explains in the Preface to *On the Study of Words*: "It seems to me that the subject is one to which it is beyond measure desirable that their attention, who are teaching, or shall have hereafter to teach, others, should be directed; so that they shall learn to regard language as one of the chiefest organs of their own education and that of others." Trench, a graduate of Cambridge, came to King's College, London, in 1846 as professor of divinity, but his interests lay as much with philology as with theology.

[36]Hans Aarsleff, *The Study of Language in England, 1780-1860*, pp. 234-35.

cates and permanently marks the rise or fall of the nation's life. To study a people's language will be to study them, and to study *them* at best advantage."[37] Since Furnivall, like Trench, did not fundamentally believe in language study for its own sake but "saw its justification in the light it might shed on other matters,"[38] such as details of a previous superior English society, both his and Trench's educational use of the English language and its history goes far to explain their deep interest in the new dictionary.[39]

Samuel Johnson's famous *Dictionary*, now one hundred years old, was obviously no longer adequate, considering the large number of words added to the language since 1755. Also, in the first half of the nineteenth century there were new developments in lexicography, in England as well as on the Continent, that must have influenced the planners of the *New English Dictionary (NED)*: Charles Richardson's *New Dictionary of the English Language* appeared in 1836, and Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott's *Greek-English Lexicon, Based on the German Work of Francis Passow,* came out in 1843. Richardson adopted philologist Horne Tooke's[40] fundamental principle of lexicography, which allowed etymology, not usage, to determine the one and only fundamental meaning of each word. Thus the outstanding feature of his *New Dictionary* was the copious quotations after each entry—going back to 1250—designed to guide the reader to the intrinsic meanings of words and to trace their development or descent from a radical meaning to their present form and use.

[37]Trench, *On the Study of Words*, p. 40. On March 23, 1896, Henry H. Gibbs wrote to Furnivall: "I agree . . . that the language is part of our history, but I much doubt whether the Government Philistines will perceive it. We must not forget that I have 2 supplications at the present moment . . . for Bradley & for the Dialect Society. We must not prejudice them; but if we get them we may, like Oliver ask for more." Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 321.

[38]Aarsleff, *The Study of Language in England*, p. 231. A letter from Trench, written in 1856, replies to an invitation from Furnivall to lecture on Chaucer at the London Working Men's College. Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 897.

[39]"The most significant aspect of Trench's new book is the very large number of quotations from English authors. . . . he made it a practice to add in a parenthesis in whom he has found the word. . . . Thus, in the space of a single page, Trench gives no less than 85 examples of the feminine termination in -ess, 19 from Wyclif's Bible, 8 from Chaucer and 58 in 30 different authors from Udall to Addison." Aarsleff, *The Study of Language in England*, p. 246.

[40]John Horne Tooke (1736–1812) published *Diversions of Purley* in 1786 and 1798, a philological work emphasizing the study of Gothic and Anglo-Saxon, which established his reputation as a philologist.

This is usually said to be the source of the historical method on which the *NED* was founded.

Certainly, Richardson's dictionary marked a great improvement over all other dictionaries, and it adequately illustrated the advantage of the historical method. The historical principles that the *NED* founders sought were even more fully developed in H. G. Liddell's and R. Scott's *Greek-English Lexicon Based on the German Work of Francis Passow*, which was hailed as the best of all efforts to date in English lexicography. Its completeness and the immaculate arrangement of entries, which the *NED* borrowed, were remarkable enough, but its most outstanding feature was the fundamental principle of the dictionary, which is described in the Preface by the compilers, both of whom were founding members of the Philological Society:

> Our Plan has been that marked out and begun by Passow, viz. *to make each Article a History of the usage of the word referred to*. That is, we have always sought to give the earliest authority for its use first, [so that] in most cases the word will tell its own story: the passages quoted will themselves say whether it continued in use, and whether it was used or not both in Poetry and Prose.[41]

This scientific and historical study of language had, of course, much to recommend it to Furnivall. Derived originally from the pioneering work of the German philologist Barthold Niebuhr during the first half of the century, the method was to record history "as it actually happened" or, in Leopold Von Ranke's words "wie es eigentlich gewesen." Philology was interpreted as having to do with both language and history—it was a science in which historical and linguistic facts took their place in an organic whole to supply knowledge of human nature of the past. Philologists and lexicographers

[41]H. G. Liddell and R. Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon, Based on the German Work of Francis Passow*, p. xx. Passow, a German classical scholar and lexicographer published *Handwörterbuch der Griechischen Sprache* in 1819-23. He also insisted that not all geographical, mythological and historical words belonged in a dictionary whose only purpose was to indicate the place of each single word in the body of the language. He was convinced, too, that the authority should be cited for every word and that the citation of authorities for the use of the word should be given in chronological order; for instance, the first or opening citation should not be the first or best that occurred to the lexicographer, or the one that most conveniently or neatly illustrates the common meaning of the word, but the earliest one on record. To do otherwise, according to Passow, was to defeat the purpose of quotation.

could now grope through the history of words for the primeval sources of English institutions; evidence of man's past was now to be wrested from language as well as from archaeology and archives. The great dictionary was to be a record of English civilization, as Furnivall had envisaged.[42] A few years later, in 1862, he confidently issued a patriotic call for volunteer helpers that in tone and content could not be more Furnivallesque:

> We have set ourselves to form a National Portrait Gallery, not only of the worthies, but of all the members, of the race of English words which is to form the dominant speech of the world. No winged messenger who bears to us the thoughts and aspirations, the weakness and the littleness, of our forefathers: who is to carry ours to our descendants: is to be absent,—
>
> Fling our doors wide! all, all, not one, but all, must enter: for their service let them be honoured; and though the search for them may sometimes seem wearisome, and the labour of the ingathering more irksome still, yet the work is worthy and the aim unselfish. Let us, then, persevere.[43]

In 1859, Trench brought out a third book, which revealed the deficiencies of existing dictionaries more starkly than had his first two books. His *Select Glossary of English Words Used Formerly in Senses Different from Their Present* contained almost a thousand passages "adduced in proof of the changes of meaning which [the words] have undergone,"[44] but only twenty-five of those passages came from existing dictionaries. When Trench joined the Philological Society in March, 1857[45]—by which time the *Select Glossary* had been virtually completed—it was a foregone conclusion that the society would soon be working to produce a systematic historical record of English. Trench had scarcely become a member when he, Furnivall, and Herbert Coleridge opened a discussion on the deficiencies of the two "standard" dictionaries of Johnson and Richardson and launched an appeal for a supplement to them. According to C. T. Onions, in the

[42]See Coleridge's letter to Trench, May 30, 1860, Richard Chenevix Trench, *On Some Deficiencies in Our English Dictionaries*, p. 72. See also Aarsleff, *The Study of Language in England*, pp. 7ff., 127-28.

[43]King's College Library, Furnivall Papers.

[44]Richard Chenevix Trench, Preface to *Select Glossary of English Words Used Formerly in Senses Different from Their Present.*

[45]*Philological Society Transactions*, 1857, p. 139.

"Historical Introduction" to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, "apparently as the result of a suggestion made by F. J. Furnivall to Dean Trench in May," the Philological Society at its June meeting in 1857 appointed Furnivall, Coleridge, and Trench as a special committee to collect words and idioms formerly unregistered in any dictionary,[46] an action described by Hans Aarsleff as "one of the major events in the history of language study."[47] The committee was instructed to report back to the society at its November, 1857, meeting, but at that meeting the "Report of the Unregistered Words Committee" was postponed until the December 3 meeting, and in its place Trench, prompted by Furnivall, read a paper entitled "On Some Deficiencies in Our English Dictionaries," the second part of which was delivered at the November 19 meeting.[48]

In the meantime, a circular issued by the committee in July had announced that at a recent meeting of the Philological Society the present state of English lexicography had been discussed. It had been admitted that neither Johnson's nor Richardson's dictionary could be considered a "Lexicon totius Anglicitatis," and it had been suggested that the collection of materials for the production of a national dictionary would be an object well worthy of the energies of the Society.[49]

When the original report of the "Unregistered Words Committee" was finally read by Coleridge to the society on December 3, 1857, it was resolved that "for the present this Report be received and laid on

[46]Ibid., p. 141.

[47]Aarsleff, *The Study of Language in England*, p. 258.

[48]These papers put the case for a complete supplement to existing dictionaries with no principle of exclusion, that is, with no puristic principles that would exclude words for their obsoleteness, localism, and so on, but would deal with etymological history and relationships and "give quotations illustrating the first and last appearance, and every notable point in the life-history of every word." The society was so impressed by Trench's papers that they were published in 1858 and helped give form and substance to the dictionary plan. C. T. Onions writes of *On Some Deficiencies in Our English Dictionaries*: "No-one who reads it can fail to see how clearly he anticipated the lines on which the Society's dictionary was ultimately compiled—all of them indeed, a necessary result from the historical principle which he laid down as the only sound basis for the work." *OED* 1: vii.

[49]Wilfrid Murray, *The Dictionary-Maker*, pp. 44–45. This report added: "Should unforeseen obstacles arise to prevent the publication they are empowered to declare that the MSS. will be deposited by them in the British Museum, thus forming an invaluable mass of materials in the most available state for any future student who may attempt the task of Lexicography under more favourable auspices."

the table."[50] This resolution was passed " . . . in consequence of a statement that a larger scheme, for a completely new English Dictionary might shortly be submitted to the Society."[51] The reason for this action and for the reference to "a larger scheme" was that, as work commenced on the supplement, the wisdom and practicality of the plan became more and more doubtful. Coleridge, as secretary of the Unregistered Words Committee, at first reported that seventy-six volunteers had begun working, that 121 works had been taken up, and that excellent contributions had already come in. Furnivall and others, however, soon realized that the plan of collecting these unregistered words and senses meant collating each word with at least three large dictionaries to determine whether or not it was registered—an extremely time-consuming business. Also, most of the supplementary materials already collected promised to be greater than all the dictionaries put together.[52] The obvious question was, Why supplement such a huge deficiency when a completely new work would be more practical and, in the end, more useful?

It is perfectly clear that Furnivall was responsible for the subsequent expansion of the scheme from a mere supplement to an entirely new dictionary. Aarsleff would obviously like to attribute this crucial change of plan to Trench,[53] but there is no evidence for it. It is true that Trench gave the chief impulse to providing a supplement to the Johnson and Richardson dictionaries—the precedence given to his papers over the report of the Unregistered Words Committee at the Philological Society is proof of that—but Trench did not have in mind a new, separate dictionary. In fact, it is very likely that he was opposed to the idea. Sir James Murray, the later editor of the dictionary, writes:

> I have always understood (though I find no mention of this in the society's minutes) that this extension of the scheme from a mere supplement to a new dictionary was mainly urged and carried by Dr. Furnivall, that it was not

[50] *Philological Society Transactions*, 1857, pp. 141–42.

[51] Ibid.

[52] After a hundred collectors had analyzed the most typical materials for further etymological history and relationships, the sheer magnitude of the material pointed to a new dictionary on scientific principles.

[53] Aarsleff, *The Study of Language in England*, pp. 258–59.

favoured by Dr. Trench, and that, at first at least , Mr. Coleridge was not very keen about it.[54]

Some scholars see Furnivall as the original promoter of the entire plan. James Root Hulbert writes in *Dictionaries: British and American:*

> As far as is generally known, the conception of the Oxford English Dictionary occurred not in the mind of one man but in the discussions of the (English) Philological Society. But a sentence in the Historical Introduction to the *Supplement* re-issue (p. vii) of 1933 reveals that the father of the conception was Frederick James Furnivall, who for more than fifty years was one of the most distinguished and certainly the most dynamic among English philologists. His magnificent white beard and moustache, and his startling bright eyes made him in his later years one of the most picturesque figures in London.[55]

Furnivall's own account of the beginnings of the *New English Dictionary*, given by him to the Author's Club in 1909, appeared in the *London Morning Post* on February 22, 1910:

> In November 1858 Trench wrote us a paper on the duty of making a supplement to the dictionaries of Johnson and Richardson. Herbert Coleridge, a grandson of the poet, came forward and said "I should like to take part in this." The question was who should work with him. I refused absolutely, on which Watts, who was head of the Book Department in the British Museum, reminded me that I was secretary of the Society, and that if I was asked to do a thing it was my duty to do it; so we began. We went on for about a year and a half, and then I said, "People who want a word will first look at Johnson and then at Richardson, and then at ours. Why not amalgamate it and have one dictionary?" I communicated my idea to Trench. He said, "It is a very fine idea if you can carry it out, but I do not think you can." So we went on collecting words.[56]

At its meeting on January 7, 1858, the society resolved that, instead of a supplement, a new dictionary of the English language

[54]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. 125.

[55]James Root Hulbert, *Dictionaries: British and American*, pp. 38–39. See also Nicolas Barker, *The Oxford University Press and the Spread of Learning*, p. 52.

[56]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. xliii.

should be prepared under the authority of the Philological Society and that the work should be

> placed in the hands of two Committees, the one, Literary and Historical, consisting of The Very Rev. The Dean of Westminster, F. J. Furnivall, Esq., and Herbert Coleridge, Esq., (Secretary), the other, Etymological, consisting of Hensleigh Wedgwood, Esq., and Prof Malden, and that in questions of doubt as to the form which any article shall assume, the decision of the Literary and Historical Committee shall be final.[57]

Contributors to the discarded scheme were thanked for their efforts, and Furnivall, full of patriotic enthusiasm, issued a new circular providing the general plan of the new dictionary, inviting the volunteers' continued support, and asking for more helpers. The Philological Society promised on its part to afford "every assistance in its power to enable its Committee to make a Dictionary worthy of the English Language."[58] At the next meeting, on January 21, 1858, Furnivall read the proposed circular (which does not seem to have been issued), and some additions were suggested by Goldstücker and other members.[59]

The great new dictionary scheme naturally promoted discussion of dictionary topics at the Philological Society, and many of the papers presented during this period are on lexicography and related subjects.[60] Further proof of interest in the dictionary is shown by the appearance of a second edition of Trench's two papers "revised and enlarged," to which is added a letter dated May 30, 1860, to Trench from Coleridge, with a comment on the progress and prospects of the dictionary: "More than a year passed away in combating various difficulties, and it was not till August, 1858, that we felt ourselves

[57]Historical Introduction, *OED*, 1:viii. Of the two working committees, the more important was the original Unregistered Words Committee, renamed the Literary and Historical Committee.

[58]Ibid.

[59]*Philological Society Transactions*, 1858, pp. 198–99.

[60]Rev. John Davies, "On the Etymological Deficiencies of some Modern English Dictionaries," *Philological Society Transactions*, March, 1858, p. 199; Danby P. Fry, "On Some English Dictionaries," *Philological Society Transactions*, November, 1859, pp. 257–72; Rev. Derwent Coleridge, "Observations on the Plan of the Society's Proposed New English Dictionary," *Philological Society Transactions*, May, 1860, pp. 152–56; "Extracts from the Dictionary—Articles Left by the Late Herbert Coleridge," *Philological Society Transactions*, April, 1862, p. 329.

in a position to announce the plan of a New Dictionary as a certainty, and to invite contributors to furnish us with assistance."[61]

There were many problems. The compilers soon discovered that there was no adequate dictionary of Middle English or collection of good references to central writers like Chaucer, Gower, Langland, and Barbour and that the literature of the thirteenth century was virtually unknown. Coleridge, possibly more dedicated to the dictionary than anyone else, drew up a list of references to authors of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, but this was only a very temporary expedient. Of the historical stages of the English language very little was known. Coleridge thought that English proper, as distinct from Anglo-Saxon and the period of transition, could be said to begin at 1250 and that for dictionary purposes it should be divided into three periods: the First Period, 1250 to 1526 (to the date of William Tyndale's *New Testament)*; the Second Period, 1526 to 1674 (to the death of John Milton); and the Third Period, 1674 to the present day.[62] Sir James Murray recalls having heard Furnivall say that Coleridge placed too much importance on the influence of the "Scripture Versions" on the language. As Murray points out, however, since no one really knew at the time "how the language could best be divided into periods," Furnivall had no choice but to accept Coleridge's periods "as a provisional order,"[63] and this division of literature was maintained for some time, despite Furnivall's reservations. These time periods correspond very closely with significant stages in the development of English vocabulary. That they were arrived at fortuitously is unimportant.

In a letter to Sir Frederic Madden on January 31, 1859, Furnivall wrote: "A large mass of interesting material has come in for the Dictionary. Mr. Coleridge has, I presume, told you that his 1250-

[61]Trench, *On Some Deficiencies in Our English Dictionaries*, p. 72.

[62]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. 126.

[63]Ibid. The aim of the editorial committee constituted later was to get at least one quotation for every word and sense for each of the three periods and, if possible, the earliest available example for the period in which the word came into use (Ibid.). By 1859, the committee was in a position to publish details of its undertaking in "Proposal for the Publication of a New English Dictionary by the Philological Society." Another version of the proposal with various additions was issued to the public later. A copy of the 1859 proposal is in the Furnivall Papers, King's College Library.

1300 Glossary is at the printers, and asked you for help in some difficult passages."[64] Trübner brought out the *Glossarial Index to the Printed English Literature of the Thirteenth Century* in the summer of 1859, and it was adopted as the essential guide to the early texts.

Until that time Coleridge had been doing the work of editor in an unofficial capacity. Now at his own request he was made editor. Replying on March 27, 1860, to a letter from Furnivall regarding a post as examiner in English language, literature, and history, Coleridge wrote:

> Your general acquaintance with modern Philology, and the practical use of it as a Lecturer at the Working Men's College, ought all to tell in your favour. . . . I should have felt far greater hesitation in accepting the office [as editor] than I did, had I not been fully aware that I might count on your co-operation and advice in my labours.[65]

Coleridge was provided an editorial committee at the society's meeting on December 8, 1859. The committee consisted of Trench, Key, Furnivall, Thomas Watts, F. Pulszky, Hensleigh Wedgwood, and Goldstücker. They were charged with drawing up "a set of Rules for the guidance of The Editor of the Society's new English Dictionary." These rules, passed by the society on May 12, 1860, after extensive revision[66] and called *Canones lexicographici,* determined the dictionary's division into three parts: (1) the "main" dictionary (as advocated by Trench in his essay), (2) a vocabulary of scientific and technical terms and a vocabulary of proper names both of persons and places, and (3) an etymological appendix, to which the etymologies of words in the main dictionary were to be referred.[67] The rules

[64]British Library, Eg. MS 2847, fol. 33.

[65]Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 196. Another letter in support of Furnivall's applications, from Maurice, is the one dated March 24, 1860. MS FU 599.

[66]Derwent Coleridge, for instance, argued for much wider inclusion of dialect words, a recommendation that was followed in the final version of the *Canones* but later dropped. At the May 19 meeting Herbert Coleridge read a paper, "The Canones Lexicographici and the New Dictionary," *Philological Society Transactions*, 1860, p. 305. See also "Dr. Trench on English Dictionaries," *Edinburgh Review* 109 (April, 1859):365–86.

[67]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. 127. This revision differed from the original proposal and Coleridge's own version of the "Canones," which had followed Trench's essay, "On Some Deficiencies," proposing a single work. Still Coleridge was glad that the main part would stand, as first suggested. These revisions were, of course, subsequently discarded, and the first volume followed the first plan very closely when it appeared twenty years later.

established for the guidance of the collectors were long and specific. The *New English Dictionary* was to trace the biography of a word, show when it was introduced into speech if it did not already exist in Anglo-Saxon, show the development of each meaning and its historical relation to the other meanings of the word, and, for obsolete words or meanings supply the date of their latest occurrence. All of this was to be conveyed by means of dated quotations, normally single sentences containing the words. Furnivall later explained in an interview that "the notion was to strain all English literature through a sieve, as it were, and so catch the first appearance of every word as it came into the language and its last appearance before it died out, with quotations to illustrate its uses in most of the centuries through which it has passed."[68]

In his letter to Trench in May, 1860, Coleridge included the following details in his progress report: 139 works in the First Period had been undertaken by readers, and 64 had been completed; in the Second Period, research on 276 works had begun; and in the Third Period, works in the eighteenth century had been undertaken by American readers.[69] Describing his literary work from 1858 to 1867, William Michael Rossetti recalls how the Philological Society invited various persons to read books from different periods and select extracts that would be suitable for inclusion as quotations in the projected dictionary. He estimates that for this purpose he probably read more than one hundred volumes, "some of them big affairs, such as all the dramas of [Philip] Massinger."[70]

By 1860, using existing dictionaries and materials submitted by contributors, Coleridge was preparing word lists to guide workers in further collecting. The Third Period was chosen for this purpose, and on February 14, 1861, Coleridge "laid on the table" of the Philological Society "the first part, A-D, of the 3rd Period, Basis of Comparison

[68]*Great Thoughts from Master Minds*, 8:88.

[69]Coleridge's letter to Trench contains a reference to cooperation from America: "The Hon. G. P. Marsh of Burlington, Vermont, having kindly offered to act as secretary in America, I at once suggested that the Americans should make themselves responsible for the whole of the 18th century literature, which probably would have a less chance of finding as many readers in England. This was agreed to . . . and contributors are, as I understand, coming in, but no result of their labours has reached us yet."

[70]William Michael Rossetti, *Some Reminiscences of William Michael Rossetti*, 2:301-302.

for the Society's New English Dictionary." This vocabulary of words, indicating those for which he had quotations and the authors cited, a laborious work of twenty-four pages in three columns of small print, was the last work he did for the *NED.*

On April 23, 1861, at the age of thirty-one, Coleridge died of consumption. He worked hard on the dictionary to the end; it is said that when he was told that he was dying he exclaimed, "I must begin Sanskrit tomorrow" and that on his deathbed were spread out word lists and quotation slips.[71] James Murray suggested that, had he lived, a dictionary "of some extent, on the society's lines" might well have been produced in the 1860s or 1870s. On the other hand, Edwin Guest wrote to Furnivall on April 27, 1861: "I am sorry to hear of H. Coleridge's death—though I do not think your Dictionary will suffer from it. His vocabulary was a sad affair—worthy of T. Wright himself."[72]

Neither Coleridge nor anyone else had properly conceived the massive amount of work that lay ahead. Murray wrote in 1911:

> I have in my scriptorium a small block of fifty-four pigeon-holes which formed his repository for quotation slips, and which is capable at the most of holding 100,000 quotations; and I have heard Dr. Furnivall say that Coleridge thought that, when he had these filled, it would be time to begin to make the dictionary. The quotations now accumulated would fill some 2,500 similar pigeon-holes and number some five or six millions, of which more than a million and a quarter will be printed in the Oxford Dictionary.[73]

Before he died, Coleridge had actually prepared a few of the *A* words for printing, as many as the material sent to him allowed, and he had reached the point of printing a specimen page containing the word

[71]K. M. Elisabeth Murray, *Caught in the Web of Words*, p. 136. When the second part of the "Basis of Comparison" (*E* to *L*) came out later that year, a prefatory note by Furnivall, dated September 25, commented: "Since the publication of the First Part of his Basis, our proposed Dictionary has received a severe blow by the death of its first Editor, the able and accomplished Herbert Coleridge. In its service he caught the cold which resulted in his death." The third part (*M* to *Z*) of the basis of comparison for the modern period was completed and published by Furnivall on March 15, 1863.

[72]Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 345. Thomas Wright, philologist and editor, was a member of the Roxburghe Club and the Camden Society. He was a pioneer in Anglo-Saxon and medieval antiquarian studies, but much of his work is very careless and full of errors.

[73]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. 128.

range *Affect-Affection.* The vastness of the scheme is made clear in a speech delivered at a dinner in Goldsmith's Hall on June 6, 1928, to celebrate the completion of the *Oxford English Dictionary.* The speaker, Sir William Craigie, "senior surviving editor of the Dictionary," comments during his speech, in which he refers to Furnivall as the grandfather of the *OED*, that a modern lexicographer

> must be prepared, and determined to live to a good old age if he is to be certain of finishing the work which he has so light-heartedly begun. Fortunately the Dictionary has had a goodly share of long-lived workers.[74] While doing part of the letter *S*, I came across a slip on which the subeditor had proudly recorded "I have finished this word on my 82nd birthday." It is only some two years ago that I mentioned, at a meeting of the Philological Society, that the word *welsher* was from the year 1860. A member present promptly spoke up and said "I heard it at the Derby in 1856."[75]

Coleridge's death left Furnivall, thirty-six years old, the only possible candidate for the editorship of the dictionary;[76] without his drive the scheme might well have collapsed before then. Before his death, Coleridge had persuaded Furnivall to take his place as editor and made him promise to see the great project through to its conclusion.[77] Wedgwood wrote to Furnivall in April, 1861: "I hear that poor Coleridge was sensible to the last sending for his Dr. to thank him for his attention a few minutes before his death. I am very glad to hear you are able to undertake the dictionary which must otherwise have gone to pot."[78] Furnivall was duly appointed editor, and at the May 23 meeting of the Philological Society he made a statement about "the present condition of the Collections for the Society's Dictionary and the course he proposed to pursue with regard to the scheme."[79] According to Sir James Murray, Furnivall was much more aware than were most other people of the immensity of the project.[80] He realized, for instance, the absolute necessity of acquiring a more extensive

[74]Furnivall worked on the dictionary for more than fifty years; Murray, for thirty-six years.

[75]*Oxford English Dictionary, 1884-1928: Speeches Delivered in the Goldsmiths' Hall*, p.14.

[76]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. 129.

[77]Murray, *Caught in the Web of Words*, p. 136.

[78]Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 938.

[79]*Philological Society Transactions*, 1861, p. 309.

[80]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. 129.

collection of material and of dividing up and assigning the constructive and editorial work that had to be done. More voluntary helpers and subeditors had to be found. Wilfrid Murray writes of this period in the dictionary's history:

> Upon his [Coleridge's] death Furnivall threw himself into the breach with characteristic impetuosity and continued to carry on from year to year—although his multifarious interests prevented him from being anything more than a titular editor. As a not unfriendly critic has said "fortunately his bellicose and tempestuous personality was never concerned with the actual editing."[81]

That may be so, but, left to deal with the work almost single-handed, the mercurial Furnivall kept the dictionary moving during a crucial phase in its development and proceeded to organize ingenious schemes for the collection and arrangement of materials which later editors, including Murray, found "invaluable."[82] The importance of Furnivall's schemes for collecting and arranging is indicated by Coleridge's complaints of the "dilatoriness of many contributors" that prevented him from naming "an earlier period" to give "our first number to the world."[83]

From the beginning all work on the dictionary had been voluntary, especially the work of collecting illustrative quotations from all the periods of English literature subsequent to the decline of Anglo-Saxon. Furnivall brought to his new job as chief editor a rare ability to persuade and even induce persons to undertake huge amounts of work without payment, and it must be stressed that without the help of these volunteer workers the materials for the dictionary could never have been collected.

During the early 1860s the work of reading and collecting was intensified. Furnivall's office at 3 Old Square and his home at 3 St. George's Square groaned under the weight of sacksfull of extracts, and he conceived a new plan of dividing up the alphabet among volunteer subeditors, each of whom would take charge of the material for one particular letter or part of one large letter (for example *S* or *A*).

[81]Murray, *The Dictionary-Maker*, p. 48.

[82]Munro, *Furnivall*, pp. 134–35.

[83]Peter Sutcliffe, *The Oxford University Press*, p. 53. Sutcliffe describes Furnivall as "a man of turbulent character, part clown, part scholar, a charlatan of fanatical integrity." Ibid., p. 54.

Each subeditor would receive quotations beginning with this letter; arrange them alphabetically into word groups, each word listed chronologically and according to its sense; and then write the definition or adopt definitions from other dictionaries and so leave the editor with only the final redaction of the article.[84] Under this scheme collected quotations began to be set out in a more orderly and coherent fashion, and throughout those early years a great deal of arranging and subediting work was effectively carried out. One important rule was that every quotation from a given author had to be written out separately, and as fully as necessary, on a half sheet of ordinary notepaper so that all the slips were of the same size. Each quotation was to illustrate a particular use of a word, the word itself being clearly written at the top left-hand corner of each slip.

In a letter to William Carew Hazlitt dated July 1, 1861, Furnivall writes:

> I shall be very much obliged to you if you will read Carew, Corbet, and Randolph for the Dictionary and also Whitford's Werke for Householders. . . . I post you a copy of Mr. Coleridge's Glossary with this. . . . We cannot go to press for 2 years at least, there is so much still to do. However, if all our old contributors come forward with such liberality as you have done, we shall soon get the rest of the books read.[85]

In a letter to Hazlitt written on November 28 of that year, there is a note of irritability because Hazlitt has not abided by the rules: "Thank you for your extracts from Randolph. But next time, will you be good enough to copy out each passage on a separate half-sheet of notepaper. All your former ones I shall be obliged to have cut up, and pasted on larger pieces of paper."[86]

A volunteer in Hastings, Elizabeth Cooper, writes on October 6, 1865, to assure Furnivall that she is continuing her search for words:

> I have just completed reading the first Vol. of "Sullivan's Views of Nature" after which I shall have to cut out & arrange all the selected passages. It is of

[84]Furnivall pointed out that words like *come, do,* and *put* have extensive histories when one includes the large number of senses in which they have been used since Anglo-Saxon and Norman times. Since every variation of meaning is given in the *New English Dictionary*, it is not surprising to find that the word *come*, for example, occupies twenty-two and a half columns.

[85]British Library, MS 38898, fol. 116.

[86]Ibid., fol. 130.

course very tedious and requires a great deal of patience. . . . I can truly say that I have gone through the reading thoroughly and that no word has escaped me.[87]

Another worker, in Plymouth, writes:

I have today sent by Van Train a parcel containing the remains of Stanley's History and the Slips with the paper that I did not require. I would draw your attention to three portions of the book that I have not done as I wished—the first is the names of certain treatises: the words are doubtless descriptive, but there is nothing more than those in the text to extract. . . . I have now a first edition of Johnson's Dictionary 2 Vols and I have taken from the History, Words that were not in that at all, Words that were without any illustration in any sense, Words that were used in a different sense from that of any illustration given and lastly those that had not a quotation from a writer of a period including that of Stanley.[88]

The number of slips soon mounted up, and tens of thousands of them made the job of sorting in alphabetical order a very demanding one. Furnivall himself was, of course, responsible for all the slips. Edward Dowden records how, as one of Furnivall's subeditors, he was given the time-consuming job of sorting the quotation slips for the letter *O*—an assignment for which he regarded himself as unqualified because "my philological lore was small."[89]

Another measure that Furnivall took when be became editor was to compile a "List of Books Already Read or Now (12 July, 1861) Being read for the Philological Society's New English Dictionary," which was published as an appendix to the society's *Transactions* for 1860-61. The numbers given are as follows: First Period, 143 works and authors; Second Period, 486; and Third Period, 31.[90] In a letter to Sir Frederic Madden, who, as keeper of manuscripts in the British Museum, was an obvious storehouse of information for Furnivall's vigorous researching, Furnivall asks: "Will you kindly tell me whether you have any note of the above (Liber Cure Cocorum MS. Sloane, 1986) having been printed? If not, we think of printing it for the

[87]King's College Library, Furnivall Papers, letter, October 6, 1865.

[88]Ibid.

[89]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. 35.

[90]Among the principal readers are listed Furnivall, the Rev. J. Eastwood, H. H. Gibbs, E. S. Jackson, the Rev. Dr. Stocker, W. C. Hazlitt, and a Mr. Sprange.

Philolog. Soc. Can you recommend us any other short MS. on the same or a kindred subject to go with it?" Referring to a list of thirty-eight book titles attached to the letter, he continues: "I don't know what dates to put to the books in the enclosed list. They are used for our Dictionary. If you would put a 'c.i.—' [correctly identified?] to any about which you have made up your mind, I should be greatly obliged to you."[91]

Unlike Coleridge, Furnivall was sure that the time for editing was still in the future:

> I have determined to put aside all idea of printing the first part of the Dictionary for four to five years unless some great unexpected help is forthcoming; and I propose, if all go well, to finish this Third-Period Basis early next year; then to compile Two Concise Dictionaries of Early and Middle English, which shall include severally all the materials sent in for the First and Second Periods.[92]

The great danger was that without fresh new direction the huge enterprise would come to a standstill and remain stagnant for years to come and that the massive amount of material collected—something like two and a half million quotations collected from the works of three or four thousand writers—would be left to gather dust in the vaults of the British Museum. To answer the nagging question of contributors, "When do you expect to print?" and to make easier the preparation of the huge dictionary, Furnivall hit upon the idea of producing first a "Concise Dictionary." It was to be an abstract of the great dictionary and would contain only brief word definitions and a few brief quotations but full and complete references to all the quotations prepared for the main dictionary. It would show what quotations were already in hand for each word and sense, together with date, and would also reveal those gaps in the series that still had to be filled.

On February 27, 1862, Furnivall read a paper to the Philological Society asking the society to adopt his plan for a concise dictionary and

[91]British Library, Eg. MS 2847, fol. 262, letter, April 4, 1862.

[92]On the other hand, Furnivall also wrote, "Meantime the etymological material will, I trust, be ready," a reference to work to be carried out by Carl Lottner on the basis of Worcester's dictionary, with the provision that Lottner's work "will be submitted to the Etymological Committee, perhaps before it is printed," a statement suggesting that even Furnivall was not wholly aware of the immense scope of the project.

give authorization to contributors and subeditors to work toward the preparation of such a compendium. After a long discussion Furnivall's proposals were accepted by the society,[93] which also resolved that Furnivall "be requested to print off at the expense of the Society a specimen of the concise dictionary which he proposes, and to lay it before the Society for their final decision before proceeding further with the printing of such dictionary."[94]

Furnivall told his subeditors that the last resolution was merely a safeguard so that the society's name would not be pledged to a preliminary book without the members' knowledge of what it was to be like. He added, however, characteristically, "Whether the society ultimately resolve on allowing the book to be called the 'Philological Society's Concise Dictionary' or not, my arrangements with the publishers will secure its appearance as a working book, an abridged first edition of the new dictionary originally proposed."[95] There was a practical aspect to Furnivall's "concise dictionary" plan. An agreement made with the publisher Trübner in 1858 had long since lapsed, and Furnivall saw little chance of gaining a publisher for the great dictionary. He was so sure that the smaller work could be finished within a few years, however, that he went ahead and made a personal contract with publisher John Murray to have the manuscript of the concise dictionary ready for press in just under three years' time, the deadline being December 31, 1865. John Murray had entered into negotiations in 1858 to publish the *New English Dictionary*. To begin with, Murray was willing to underwrite the scheme and pay the Philological Society half the profits. When, however, he discovered that the book would cost £10,000 to produce and that each copy must sell for about 10 guineas, he backed off and suggested that the *New English Dictionary* scheme should be carried out along more practical lines—"as a tool for the learned and the unlearned." He thought that all obsolete words should be omitted and that Furnivall should exclude scientific words and those of common occurrence in conversation and newspapers: "I doubt not that you have your eye on newly invented words—the products of modern industry—such as Buffers, Sleepers,

[93]*Philological Society Transactions*, 1862, p. 328.

[94]Ibid.

[95]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. 131.

Navvy, to Shunt, etc." Murray found Furnivall a "h'arbitrary gent," and the negotiations collapsed.[96]

In the meantime work on the great dictionary was moving ahead. In a circular to subeditors Furnivall encourages them to engage their readers, in precisely the way he would later in his prefaces to Early English Text Society publications:

> Lastly, having finished the strict business of an Article, I exhort you, for the Full Dictionary, to indulge in a little chat with your Reader, noting for him the chief points of interest in the history you have set before him, moralizing shortly on them if you will, and giving any additional facts, . . . in short, telling him all you wish him to hear. Being good sense and well put, as of course it will be, Editor and Publisher will be only too glad to find room for it.[97]

News of the plan for the concise dictionary was well received. The knowledge that at last something was going to be printed, and by a certain date, gave a much-needed boost to the morale of readers and subeditors, and during the following three or four years collecting and arranging of materials proceeded vigorously. Three of four of the more earnest subeditors prepared lists of words coming under the letters they had agreed to subedit, and these were printed separately, starting in 1863 with the list for the letter *B*, compiled by "W. Gee, Esq., sub-editor of the 'B' words." The list, filling 93 pages in triple columns, gave the date of the earliest example of each word in the material and the latest date for each obsolete word. Each word was followed by numbers to indicate the periods (First, Second, and Third) for which there were quotations. In 1865 similar lists were issued for the letters *N* and *U-V*.[98]

Describing progress in the subediting, Furnivall notes that "the books now in hand for cutting up are: AD.1375-1400 A volume of Chaucer's Minor Poems. AD.1500 The Romans of Lancelot of the Laik. AD.1502 Arnold's Chronicle, ed. 1811. AD.1530 Hervet Xenophon's Boke of Householde. AD.1535 Coverdale's Bible."[99]

[96]George Paston, *At John Murray's: Records of a Literary Circle, 1843-1892*, pp. 153-54.

[97]Murray, *Caught in the Web of Words*, p. 138.

[98]Rev. T. Sheppard, *Vocabulary of Words Beginning with the Letters* U *and* V *for Which Extracts Are Wanted for the Concise Dictionary (Preparatory to the Philological Society's New English Dictionary).*

[99]Ibid. See also *An Alphabetical List of English Words Occurring in the Literature of the 18th and 19th Centuries, and Forming a Basis of Comparison for the Use of Contributors to the New Dictionary of the Philological Society: Part III,* M *to* Z.

Cutting up and marking books was a method of collecting material that saved time and labor and, of course, made for clarity and therefore accuracy. The true bibliophile, however, would weep to see early dictionary slips with bits of black-letter editions of the sixteenth century pasted on them. One mutilated book in "Furnivall's Library" at King's College, London, which was obviously a victim of cutting up, is *Captain Cook's First, Second, Third and Last Voyages,* volume 5 (London, 1790).[100] Elisabeth Murray writes:

> Furnivall started buying books which were then offered to readers for marking or cutting up. He told James Murray later only to offer cheap or second-hand ones from Mudies Lending Library, explaining, "I used to buy dear old ones, but men often bagd 'em & sent me no slips. One man had about £5 worth." Nevertheless a number of valuable old books did get cut up.[101]

Each October during the period 1862 to 1872, Furnivall sent an annual circular to the members of the Philological Society tracing the progress of the dictionary under his editorship. Parts of the circulars were quoted by the Reverend George Wheelwright, of East Grinstead, in his *Appeal to the English Speaking Public on Behalf of the New English Dictionary,* issued in 1875. In these excepts there is evidence of the readers' and subeditors' hard work on the concise dictionary during the first three or four years, but after that there are signs of a gradual tapering off, which was due in part to Furnivall's increasing involvement in other things. In October, 1865, Furnivall reported that the concise dictionary, though still making some progress, was far behind schedule. He had promised to send the manuscript to Murray for printing on December 31, 1865, but that was obviously no longer possible, and it was clear that the work could not be completed "for the next year (though several letters are promised before the end of the winter)."[102]

[100]C. T. Onions explains this technical phrase "cutting up" as follows: "These words indicate a method of collecting material extensively employed from this time onward, by which the reader for the Dictionary was saved much time and labour by being freed from copying the quotations, while the Editor had the advantages of the original print and a fuller context. The defects of the method were that two copies of each book were required to give the full text, and that many early printed works were dealt with in this way which would have been of greater value in the hands of the editors." Historical Introduction, *OED*, p. xi.

[101]Murray, *Caught in the Web of Words*, p. 139.

[102]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. 133.

At that time he was still teaching English grammar and English literature in the London Working Men's College, and he remained actively involved in the social life of the college, but it was the founding of the Early English Text Society in 1864 that had usurped the time and energy that he had formerly devoted to the dictionary. On June 29, 1867, Furnivall wrote to Hazlitt:

> Thank you for offering me to join your Council. Of course I should like to have a finger in every pie, but under present circumstances I think you'd better put me down as a subscriber for one year only, just to help at the start, & then let me withdraw. I shan't be able to afford to keep on & I *must not* give time away from the too many things I have in hand now, some of which are standing still for want of time at my disposal.[103]

On December 21, 1867, Dowden wrote to Furnivall from Dublin: "Armstrong told me some time ago that the work was too heavy & that he should have to resign it. I waited hoping to find someone in my class, or among the E.E.T. Society Prizes' candidates who could adequately fulfill the work."[104] In May, 1868, the *Athenaeum* reported that "the general belief is that the project will not be carried out."[105] Furnivall began relaxing his appeals to readers and subeditors, and the October circulars told of subeditors giving up, becoming ill, or asking to resign and of books lying around waiting for cutting up and extracting. Furnivall's "Preliminary Notice" in *The Philological Society New English Dictionary Vocabulary of Words...* has the following statement: "A fresh appeal to the contributors must again be made to help in the sub-editing. Two successive sub-editors of M—not a heavy letter—have thrown up their task." There is an almost desperate note in the appeal: "The following books are at the disposal of any Readers who will kindly volunteer to cut them up, and gum the extracts on slips containing the printed titles: 1478-1639 Letters and Papers of the Verney Family (Camden Society), 1513 Gawin Douglas, Virgil's Aeneis, 1710 revision of the 1533 ed." In 1868, Furnivall admitted that the reading of books was being continued by only "a faithful few."[106] The *Transactions* of the

[103]British Library, Add. MS 38899, fol. 404.

[104]King's College Library, Furnivall Papers.

[105]*Athenaeum*, May 16, 1868, p. 698.

[106]Munro, *Furnivall*, pp. 133-34.

society (which did not carry the October circulars) make very little mention during these years of the dictionary. On November 6, 1868, the *Transactions* reported that "the Hon. Secretary [Furnivall] made a statement as to the progress of the Society's proposed new English Dictionary, together with a calculation by the Rev. G. Wheelwright showing that about one-third of the work had been sub-edited." On May 21, 1869, an even briefer reference is made to the dictionary, though during the later part of that year the following comment came from Furnivall: "The sending in of extracts for the dictionary is still kept up by a few readers; about sixty packets of extracts have been sent in since last October."[107]

The work was slowing grinding to a halt, and in the early 1870s the collecting of materials almost ceased completely, except, of course, by Furnivall himself. The 1872 circular admits that "the progress in the Dictionary work has been so slight that no fresh report in detail is needed." Certainly a few subeditors who still had a deep interest in Furnivall's "winged messengers" and a commitment to the dictionary worked on, but the large majority returned their materials to Furnivall, whose lobbies, according to Murray, "were cumbered with boxes and bundles of every size and form."[108] In 1879 the amount of material collected weighed nearly two tons. Many of the materials garnered for other letters of the alphabet remained in the homes of those who had worked at subediting them or with surviving members of their families. One subeditor, having sent back part of the material he had held, promised "to search for the rest, which had been disposed by his wife in a lumber room."[109] The work of collecting all the materials scattered across the country was thus an enormously difficult one when the *NED* was taken over by Oxford University Press. It took years to locate and recover various papers.

After the circular of 1872, no further mention is made of the dictionary scheme until May 15, 1874, when Alex J. Ellis includes it in a survey of the Philological Society's work in the annual presidential address. Referring obliquely to the suitability of Henry Sweet for the

[107]Ibid., p. 134.

[108]Ibid., p. 134.

[109]Historical Introduction, *OED*, p. xii.

job of editor, he pays tribute to Furnivall's Early English Text Society and his Chaucer, Ballad, and New Shakspere societies for providing dictionary material but fears that, because of Furnivall's ever-increasing efforts to promote the study of older literature, the dictionary materials already collected will go to waste.[110] Wheelwright, the subeditor of *F*, also had serious misgivings about what would happen to work already completed. He demanded that Furnivall make up his mind about the future of the scheme and so end "the intolerable suspense under which we now groan."[111]

An opportunity to make use of the collections presented itself in 1876. The American publishing firm Harper and Brothers, bent on superseding Webster's dictionary, commissioned Alexander Macmillan, the London publisher, to find a scholar for their purpose. When Sweet declined the offer, Furnivall recommended Murray, and from that moment Furnivall, "like a busy spider," to use Elisabeth Murray's metaphor, began spinning a web "in which to entrap" Murray in the dictionary project.[112] According to Peter Sutcliffe, the delegates of the Oxford University Press had more or less decided to accept Furnivall's recommendation, "subject only to Murray proving amenable and sane. Had he turned out to be another Furnivall or Sweet, the outcome might have been different. As it was, he appeared docile if dogged."[113] Later, with Skeat's help, Murray proposed to Macmillan a scheme for a work of four thousand pages based upon the material already collected for the *NED*. Skeat realized that Furnivall would eventually have to be brought into the scheme since, of course, only he knew all the subeditors and where their work was to be found. He advised Murray, however, that, in the meantime

> if it can be managed without Mr. Furnivall till all is fairly in order, it will certainly be best. Without doubt, he will publish all he knows about it at the earliest opportunity. I have told him plainly, often, that this is often annoying: but, though he is at heart one of the best of men, he will not take *that* hint.[114]

[110]*Philological Society Transactions*, 1873–74, pp. 354–56.

[111]Murray, *Caught in the Web of Words*, p. 140.

[112]Ibid., p. 100.

[113]Sutcliff, *The Oxford University Press*, p. 56.

[114]Murray, *Caught in the Web of Words*, pp. 140–41.

Negotiations broke down, mainly because Furnivall, not surprisingly, refused to allow the society's material to be used for anything but its own scheme. Furnivall, always ready to drive a hard bargain, wrote to Murray (whom he now called "Mr. Editor"):

> On the whole, I look on it, that Mcm. takes up the Phil. Soc. Dicty . . . & accepts our Editor, you. We don't use our material for his notion. . . . Of course, we mustn't give Mcm. too much for too little. It must be *the Society's Dicty.* We must have the appointment of the Edr. from time to time, or a voice in it, & the material must be preserved & belong to us.[115]

With his customary optimism Furnivall was convinced that any publisher would be only too glad to snap up the dictionary. Thus his strategy was to barter with Macmillan by threatening to take the work—a four-thousand-page abridgment of the great dictionary—elsewhere, if his conditions were not met. Negotiations with Macmillan were proceeding well until it was discovered that Furnivall had been trying to make clandestine overtures to Clarendon Press to enable him to bargain with Macmillan. Things came to a head when he sent a letter to Macmillan charging the firm with self-interest and demanding half the profits for the society. An angry Alexander Macmillan wrote to Murray: "It is a pity that his [Furnivall's] pretty playful ways should ever be intruded into serious business."[116] Furnivall's interference brought the negotiations to an end. As it turned out, however, he did all concerned a good turn, because Macmillan probably could never have produced the great dictionary anyway, and publication of the smaller one would only have jeopardized the chances of the *OED.*

Furnivall, of course, did not give up the struggle; tactless and meddling, he was also very persistent. Only two days after demolishing the Macmillan plan, he was instructing Murray to prepare specimens of work done to tempt various publishers. Skeat was detailed to approach Cambridge University Press, but he soon discovered that the press would have nothing to do with any scheme which involved Furnivall. Skeat later told Murray:

[115]Ibid., p. 141.

[116]Ibid., p. 143.

> Somehow, he isn't believed in at the Universities. . . . It has arisen from his odd prefaces, etc & modes of expression—And your present chance, a good one, will all come to grief unless you listen to all he says, & then *systematically & effectively disregard* it all in practice.[117]

The next move was made by Sweet, who wrote to the delegates of Oxford University Press, mentioning Murray as editor and urging the great merits of the project. When Oxford hesitated on the grounds of the work's uncertain financial prospects, Furnivall countered, "Do ask yourself whether such a keen set as Macmillans firm would have proposed to take it up if they didn't see their way clear to a certain success."[118] A further hitch in negotiations was brought about by Skeat when he innocently offered to Oxford his own etymological dictionary for publication. Furnivall went to Cambridge to consult with Skeat and then proceeded to Oxford to convince Max Müller (one of the delegates) of the merits of work already completed. According to Elisabeth Murray, Furnivall then "produced a list of 393 readers" and promised that the society would find volunteers to read and that quotations from known authors would replace those which had been criticized because they came from the daily press. He then asked James Murray to write "a conciliatory letter, because 'we must humour the Dons as much as we can.' "[119]

Eventually, in 1878, Murray was made editor of the dictionary, and everything was more or less settled, except for prolonged squabbling by Furnivall and Sweet over the question of the sharing of profits. For example, after it was suggested that the society's share should be only 15 percent, Furnivall and Murray had an interview with the Oxford delegates—"some dozen of them"—during which Furnivall charged them:

> Why do you deal thus with us? We are (in the main) University men, as you are: we are a learned body working for the science we are devoted to, content to be poor that it may be advanced. Why, because you have the capital or the command of it, why screw us? I won't insult the understanding of any one among you by supposing that you think the result of the Dictionary will not be

[117]Ibid.

[118]Ibid., p. 150.

[119]Ibid., p. 154.

a certain success. . . . You know, as we do . . . that the Dicty. *must* pay, and that right well.[120]

After further wrangling, which lasted six months, the Philological Society voted on February 7, 1879, to accept the agreement to secure publication of the dictionary,[121] and Furnivall announced to Murray he was willing to forget the past and get on with the work that lay ahead of them. And so at last James Augustus Henry Murray, caught in Furnivall's web, could get down to serious work as full-time editor of the great dictionary.

By May 10, with a few exceptions, all the material reported by Furnivall to have been in the possession of the subeditors had been either sent to Murray or satisfactorily accounted for. Material was not necessarily confined to locations in Britain—the letter *H* had to come all the way from Florence, Italy. Reporting to Furnivall after the preliminary sorting, Murray wrote:

I think we have all the rest or know where it is; but it is not very easy to tell without a more detailed examination than we can yet give. Some of the letters being in utter confusion, and requiring a month or more to sort, we may find sections wanting. There are some cruel jokes in your reports G "done," "nearly done," "will be done in 1872"—a mass of utter confusion. . . . I am sorely troubled about H. Q. & Pa.[122]

Furnivall's response was almost cavalier:

H is, perhaps, (I think, certainly) with the Hon. G. P. March, U.S. Legation, Rome. . . . Q & Pa I forget altogether. But doubtless W. Middleton at the old address 'll tell you where Q is. Write at once to him. . . . As to cruel jokes, I of course only gave the Sub-editors' own Reports. S & T all the slips were professedly sent back: the stock of S is immense. X ? wasn't this returned done.[123]

Having unloaded this huge mass of material, much of which he had collected himself, Furnivall stepped down from the position of "titular editor" which he had held for eighteen years. In a circular to former readers for the dictionary he confirmed the contract with Oxford and

[120]Ibid., pp. 162-63.

[121]Ibid., p. 167.

[122]Ibid., pp. 175-76.

[123]Ibid., p. 176.

expressed the belief that the publication would be "sufficiently large to satisfy all the needs of scholarship, and to place English lexicography in a position abreast of any modern language."[124] Always mindful of posterity, Furnivall sent out a printed notice to all helpers asking them for photographs of themselves, "to be placed in the Album [?] among those of your fellow workers." He assured them that "the collection is one of great interest now, and will be of greater to those who follow us."[125]

Furnivall continued to work for the dictionary, though he was no longer officially engaged in the scheme, and supplied the editors with masses of material not only from the publications of his literary societies but from many other sources, including his morning and evening newspapers. Alfred W. Pollard recalls his visit to the British Museum reading room, where "as a rule I found him reading a copy of the *Westminster Gazette* in the interests of his beloved dictionary."[126] If the dictionary for one period quotes the *Daily News* and at another the *Daily Chronicle,* it is because Furnivall had for some reason changed his newspaper in the meantime. Sir James Murray states: "He [Furnivall] was by far the most voluminous of our 'readers,' and the slips in his handwriting and the clippings by him from printed books, and from newspapers and magazines, form a very large fraction of the millions in the Scriptorium."[127] In the dictionary, under the heading "The Following Readers Have Contributed Most Largely to the Materials," the phrase "about 30,000 quotations" appears opposite Furnivall's name. He was not the leading contributor in terms of the number of quotations (cf. "William Douglas, London, 136,000"),[128] but considering the range of his other activities, his contribution is a remarkable one. Moreover, he is listed in the category of "those who have devoted their attention to supply our desiderata, or who, keeping themselves acquainted with the current progress of the work, have been always ready to undertake searches in connexion

[124]Murray, *The Dictionary-Maker*, p. 85.

[125]King's College Library, Furnivall Papers.

[126]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. 151.

[127]Ibid., pp. 134-35.

[128]*The New English Dictionary*, ed. J. A. H. Murray, p. xv.

with groups or words at which the Editor and his staff were actually working."[129]

A short time before he died, Furnivall was asked about his recent work for the dictionary. He pointed to several piles of newspaper cuttings, carefully bound in elastic bands, on his desk and said:

> I go through the papers and cut out all the new and unfamiliar words I come across. For instance, the other day I read in the Westminster Gazette the word "aviatory" which was an entire stranger to me. All the words brought into use by the motor-car industry and the new science of flying will have to be included in the supplement, which will be a very important volume.[130]

Furnivall explained that, "for certain outlandish words, such as those imported from the Balearic Isles, the late Mr. James Platt was consulted, as he was a great authority on these unfamiliar words taken from other languages." Indeed, for every section there was a "learned advisor," who verified for the editor each word's history and definition. Others, like Albert Matthews, Furnivall continued,

> take up such phrases as "Yankee Doodle" and work out their origin and history for us. The origin of some slang words, such, for instance, as "humbug," which came into use in 1750, though no one can say what is its derivation, is very difficult to trace. "Gas" is a word which was coined by its inventor, Van Helmont, and so also the word "Kodak" simply came to its inventor as an inspiration.

When asked about the admissability of slang words, Furnivall replied that

> the rule is to be rather inclusive than exclusive, to give the facts of the language rather than set ourselves to be academic. If a slang word comes into literature, then we should take it up. All the slang used in "Tom Brown's School Days" and in Dickens' novels would probably be included. We insert also a great many scientific words, and some people have complained that this is rather overdone. But science is becoming more and more a part of the literature of the day, and it is therefore right to include them. The object is to have the whole body of the language.

[129]Ibid., p. xvi. Murray wrote, "Dr. F. J. Furnivall has been constant in his help on all points requiring further investigation, and, by personal search in the British Museum Library, and elsewhere, has saved the Editor many hours of work." Ibid., p. xiii.

[130]*Great Thoughts from Master Minds*, 8:89. In the Bodleian Library, Oxford, is a large collection of slips prepared for the *NED*.

One inevitable problem that arose was, of course, that of keeping the dictionary up to date. Furnivall wanted the supplement to be kept in type so that updating could be carried out every three to five years, but Murray wanted to cancel the first volumes and do the work all over again. A standing supplement reworked periodically would cost money, but Furnivall pointed out that Oxford had the funds—the profits of the Oxford Bible. Apparently the "Oxford Research Party" wanted this money for scientific purposes but was silenced by the fame and benefits the dictionary ultimately brought to Oxford. According to Furnivall, the debt incurred by the *OED* by 1910 was in the region of £100,000.[131]

In 1928, seventy years after the beginning of the undertaking, the Philological Society's project was finished, and in November, 1933, the book was completed with the publication of the supplement. The total cost of production for Oxford University Press was over £300,000. At the dinner in Goldsmiths' Hall to celebrate the completion of the *Oxford English Dictionary,* Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin complained that he was expected "in a few words to do justice to the merits of Professor Craigie [Sir William A. Craigie, joint editor from 1901] and his co-editor and the staff, of 15,000 pages of literature, of 400,000 words, or 2,000,000 quotations, and 178 miles of type."[132] In proposing the health of the editor and staff, Baldwin said, "I wish I could think that the Government had had something to do with it. We had a little through the Post Office. We carried millions of slips and only lost one packet. Give us credit at least for that."[133]

In *Caught in the Web of Words* Elisabeth Murray repeatedly refers to Furnivall's bustling interference in the affairs of the dictionary. Some of his statements and actions were certainly crude and frustrating. Too often Furnivall can be seen peering over James Murray's shoulder, cautioning, counseling, even rebuking the editor. In November, 1876, for instance, Furnivall instructs Murray to obtain

> a sorter and preparer of work *at once,* & use the 5 weeks before Xmas, so as to be ready to work early in the year. There's much to be done in sorting slips up for yourself & sub-editors, arranging what books are to be read, ordering

[131]Ibid.

[132]*Oxford English Dictionary, 1884–1928: Speeches in the Goldsmiths' Hall,* p. 3.

[133]Ibid., p. 7.

> printed slips for 'em etc. etc. When we appeal for fresh help, we want the material ready to put into volunteers' hands as soon as its askt for. It doesn't do to keep a man waiting 6 weeks: he cools. You'll want every day of your time.[134]

A few days later he commanded Murray: "Send me my illegible slips. When you've a Mus(eu)m Clerk, I rely on you not to set aside a slip because you're not certain of it. Let the Clerk refer & make it certain." Then he reminded Murray to write very large: "Give 3 *times* the space to each word that you generally do. My own sins enable me to advise you."[135] Murray's annoyance, even bitterness, at such meddling is seen in the following passage:

> Mr. F. J. Furnivall (who has an itching for annoying people) has been worrying me for some time, because in words like *Abider, Abiding*, etc., I do not subdivide & classify them as minutely as the v(er)bs to which they belong. . . . As there is no saying what he may do in one of his mad fits—print a letter abusing me perhaps . . . I write simply to inform you. I do not choose to accept Mr. Furnivall's dictation as to any point of the Dictionary, because I do not believe in the soundness of his judgement or the sufficiency of his scholarship; and therefore he tries to get me into trouble. He speaks of himself as a former "Editor"; he never "edited" one word—only superintended the Reading.[136]

Furnivall wrote to the delegates complaining about Murray's handling of these words, but his objections fell on deaf ears.

Murray's indignation is understandable. Yet Furnivall's peculiarities and shortcomings cannot be allowed to obscure or diminish the enormous contribution that he made to the dictionary. In Munro's *Furnivall,* Skeat wonders whether people are completely aware of "the great services rendered to English literature and the study of the English language by the late Dr. Furnivall, particularly with regard to the famous *New English Dictionary* now being printed at Oxford."[137] Perhaps Furnivall's greatest service to the dictionary was his characteristic refusal to give up the scheme during its most precarious years. While others lost heart or interest, especially in the crucial period just after Coleridge's death, and the whole project seemed to be drifting

[134]Murray, *Caught in the Web of Words*, p. 142.

[135]Ibid.

[136]Ibid., p. 192. See also *Notes and Queries* 11 (March, 1903):188, 230, 277. E. S. Dodgson and Furnivall complain about the handling of words beginning with *un-*.

[137]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. 174.

into limbo, it was Furnivall who persevered in his usual overconfident manner with the collection and organization of materials. The same tenacity later won the day when the dictionary reached the publishing stage. Elisabeth Murray writes:

> Paradoxically the history of the prolonged attempts to reach agreement with a publisher shows that while no one worked harder than Furnivall to get publication started, no one did more to cause difficulties. His impetuosity, tactlessness and frequent downright rudeness, time and again imperilled the whole project, and yet it was his persistence which saved it.[138]

The optimistic doggedness which characterized Furnivall's career was, of course, essential in the face of the countless problems and disappointments during the great scheme's history, and his cheerful, bouncy tenacity contrasts James Murray's rather dour pessimism and his temptation from time to time to throw in the towel. Murray did not like Furnivall and frequently wanted to be rid of him, but he was deeply shocked by his death and acknowledged that Furnivall's "powerful persuasion" and "promise of assistance" were large factors in inducing him to take on what proved to be a lifetime work.[139] Murray was also happy to have Furnivall to complain to, as well as complain about. On November 7, 1887, he wrote to Furnivall:

> I can hardly believe that the Philological Society has always urged the Delegates never to mind the editing, but get "the materials" out; *some* editing is wanted even in judging *which* materials are to be printed & which to be left out, & *some* investigation of the history of a word is wanted even for this.[140]

Later, on November 25, 1889, Murray wrote to Furnivall "I naturally poured out my plaint to you, as the champion of the dictionary; if I erred in doing so, I regret it."[141] As early as March 30, 1882, Furnivall had written to Murray:

> I know your feeling well. "Chuck it all up" has come to me a fair number of times. But I think this depends very much on bodily health. If you could get a good gallop or other refreshing rest or change, the old strong *will* 'ud revive . . .

[138]Murray, *Caught in the Web of Words*, p. 148.

[139]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. 134.

[140]Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 696.

[141]Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 697.

> I've no doubt that you must win. . . . the cause is well worth sacrifice. . . . Cheer up. All'll go well yet.[142]

Furnivall probably had in mind sculling or cross-country hiking as the means of saving Murray in soul and body.

Wilfred Murray, the son of Sir James Murray, sums up Furnivall's achievement:

> At the same time the Dictionary owes much to him directly and, perhaps, even still more indirectly. He kept the work before the Society by means of annual reports, though these tended to become more and more jejune as time went on. He guarded with jealous care the material which kept pouring in from readers all over the world. He instituted the invaluable system of sub-editors, picked men and women who were to work in advance on different letters, or portions of letters, of the alphabet, scrutinising and arranging the quotations, dividing words into their various senses and suggesting provisional definitions. To remedy the serious shortage of accessible sources from which to draw the necessary material for the earlier periods, and more particularly for the period of Middle English, he founded in 1864 the Early English Text Society, which was followed by a Chaucer Society in 1868, a Ballad Society, a New Shakespeare Society, the English Dialect Society[143] fathered by Professor Skeat, and other bodies of a like type, all of which might fairly be regarded as off-shoots of the Philological Society. But for the diversion of his chief energies into this fruitful new field it is difficult to see how the Dictionary could have come into being when it did.[144]

The *Oxford English Dictionary* is properly associated in people's minds with Sir James Murray, who was, after all, its first editor. Yet too many have underrated the vital role Furnivall played in the dictionary's creation and composition. That Furnivall conceived the

[142]Murray, *Caught in the Web of Words*, p. 191.

[143]Skeat was director and honorary secretary of the English Dialect Society, which was founded in 1873 and prematurely disbanded in 1896. The *English Dialect Dictionary*, the principal object in establishing the society, was published in six volumes between 1898 and 1905. Skeat's *English Dialects from the Eighth Century to the Present Day* was published at Cambridge in 1911; some of the materials are in the Skeat Papers, King's College Library. Furnivall was a member of the Dialect Society for some years, but his name does not appear in the list of members after 1892. *English Dialect Society Reports*, 1875-93.

[144]Murray, *The Dictionary-Maker*, pp. 48-49. Henry Bradley writes: "After some years, he [Furnivall] was obliged to give up the struggle; but he continued to cherish the confident hope of being able to get the work taken in hand by some scholar inspired by an enthusiasm equal to his own, and possessing the indispensable qualifications in which he acknowledged himself to be lacking." Bradley, *Sir James Murray, 1837-1915*, p. 3.

basic idea of the dictionary must be emphasized in any assessment of his contribution. Also, as Skeat insists, without Furnivall's tenacity and hard work there would have been virtually nothing for Murray to edit.[145]

In 1900, Skeat celebrated Furnivall's work for the Oxford Dictionary in the following eulogy:

Dr. Furnivall and the Oxford Dictionary in Honorem
F.J.F. (A.D. 1900)

(From MS. Harl. 7334, fol. 999, back).

A CLERK ther was of Caunterbrigge also
That unto rowing haddè long y-go.
Of thinnè shidès[146] wolde he shippès makè,
And he was nat right fat, I undertake.
And whan his ship he wrought had attè fullè,
Right gladly up the river wolde he pullè,
And eek returne as blythly as he wente.
Him rekkèd nevere that the sonne him brentè.[147]
Ne stinted he his cours for reyn ne snowè;
It was a joyè for to seen him rowè!
Yit was him lever, in his shelves newè,
Six oldè textès,[148] clad in greenish hewè,
Of Chaucer and his oldè poesyè
Than ale, or wyn of Lepe,[149] or Malvoisyè.
And therwithal he wex a philosofre;
And peyned him to gadren gold in cofre
Of sundry folk; and al that he might hentè[150]

[145]C. T. Onions acknowledges, "through his early organization of the collecting and sub-editing and his life-long contributions, the work of Furnivall pervades every page of the Dictionary and has helped in a great degree to make it what it is." Historical Introduction, *OED*, p. xii. More recently S. Schoenbaum writes, "All serious students of English language and literature owe him [Furnivall] an everlasting debt of gratitude for his contribution to the *New English Dictionary* as originator, organizer, editor and contributor." S. Schoenbaum, *Shakespeare's Lives*, p. 483.

[146]Thin boards.

[147]Burned.

[148]See Six-Text Edition of Chaucer.

[149]A town in Spain.

[150]Acquire.

On textès and emprinting he it spentè;
And busily gan bokès to purveyè
For hem that yeve him wherwith to scoleyè.[151]
Of glossaryès took he hede and curè,[152]
And when he spyèd had, by aventurè,
A word that semèd him or strange or rarè,
To henten[153] it anon he noldè sparè[154]
But wolde it on a shrede[155] of paper wrytè,
And in a chest he dide his shredès whytè,
And preyèd every man to doon the samè;
Swich maner study was to him but gamè.
And on this wysè many a yeer he wroughtè,
Ay storing every shreed that men him broughtè,
Till attè lastè, from the noble pressè
Of Clarendoun, at Oxenforde, I gessè,
Cam stalking forth the Gretè Dictionárie
That no man wel may pinche at[156] ne contrárie.
But for to tellen alle his queintè gerès,[157]
They wolden occupye wel seven yerès;
Therefore I passe as lightly as I may:
Ne speke I of his hatte or his array.
Ne how his berd by every wind was shakè
When as, for hete, his hate he wolde of takè.
Souning in[158] Erly English was his spechè,
"And gladly wolde he lerne and gladly tèchè."

WALTER W. SKEAT[159]

[151]For those that gave him the means with which to study.

[152]Care.

[153]Seize upon.

[154]Would not hesitate.

[155]All quotations illustrating special uses of English words were written on pieces of paper of a particular size.

[156]Find fault with.

[157]Curious ways.

[158]In accordance with.

[159]Additional note to Skeat's poem: "Dr. F., who is a total abstainer, was the first to apply outriggers on the Cam to the narrow wager-boat." Munro, *Furnivall*, pp. 178–80.

Furnivall's greatest regret, which he expressed to Sir James Murray just before he died, was that he would not be able to see the completion of the magisterial *Oxford English Dictionary* into which he had put so much of his life's work. Elisabeth Murray writes:

> He had seemed indestructible and even in his eighties he had lost none of his vitality. He still rowed on the Thames, he still sent his daily packet of clippings from newspapers, recording fresh words and usages for the Dictionary, with which he had been associated for fifty years. He wrote a characteristically courageous, forthright letter to James to tell him that he was suffering from an internal tumour. His letter began with an approving comment of James' article on *tallow ketch* and then continued, "Yes, our Dict. men go gradually, & I am to disappear in 6 months. . . . It's a great disappointment, as I wanted to see the Dict. finished before I die. But it is not to be. However the completion of the work is certain. So that's all right.[160]

It is probably superfluous to say that the influence of the *Oxford English Dictionary,* the greatest dictionary of any language in the world, has been enormous and far-reaching. To students of English language and literature all over the world it has been for the last fifty years a godsend. With its five million quotations from English literature and records of all kinds, it provides for every kind of reader a unique lexical companion to English letters. Sir Stanley Baldwin, in his toast to the editor and staff of the *OED* in 1928, remarked:

> Lord Oxford once said that if he were cast on a desert island, and could only choose one author for company, he would have the forty volumes of Balzac. I choose the Dictionary every time. Like Ezekiel in the valley of dry bones, I should pray for the four winds to breathe upon those words, that they might emerge and stand upon their feet an exceeding great army. Our histories, our novels, our poems, our plays—they are all in this one book. I could live with your Dictionary, Professor Craigie.[161]

By showing the history of words and idioms, their forms and various spellings, their changes of meaning and many other phenomena, the *OED* has broadened people's linguistic horizons and taught them to

[160]Murray, *Caught in the Web of Words*, pp. 303-304. See *Notes and Queries*, 11th ser. 1 (February, 1910):125. Craigie asked Furnivall to define and provide the etymology of *rumtum* (a single sculling boat). Furnivall tells the story of his definition of the word.

[161]*Oxford English Dictionary, 1884-1928: Speeches Delivered in the Goldsmiths' Hall*, pp. 9-10.

see language questions in a more scientific way. Realizing that it is far in advance of the other two great national dictionaries, Maximilien Littre's French and Grimm's German dictionaries, scholars everywhere were not slow in paying tribute to the magnificent richness and fullness of information set forth in it. Those who are engaged in the editing of writings belonging to any period of English literature find that the Philological Society's dictionary is altogether indispensable.

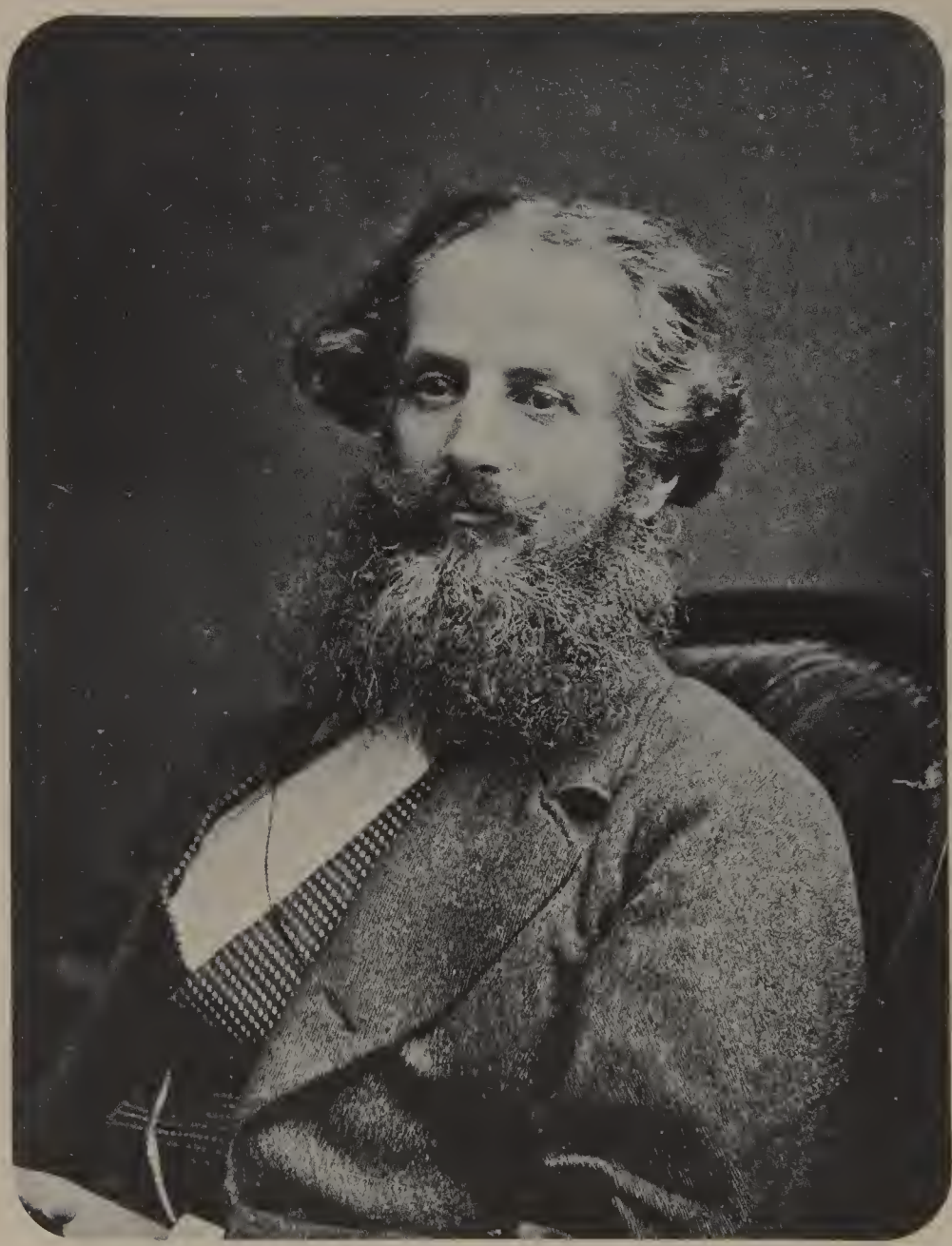
As of this writing, the "Keeper of the Queen's English" is Robert Burchfield, editor of the revised *Supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary* on which work began twenty years ago.[162] Burchfield, a former colleague of C. T. Onions, and his staff of nearly twenty-five editors and editorial assistants, aided by many outside contributors of quotations, are the recognized recorders and historians of the English language in this century. Referring to Burchfield's work, a recent article in the *Times* (London), headed "Lexicography, an Art in Which Britain Leads the World," concludes: "Not everything English flourishes at present. But our lexicography still leads the world, and our lexicographer is a worthy successor to the line of Furnivall, Murray, Craigie, Onions and the other mighty founding fathers."[163]

[162]Volume 1 (*A–G*) was published in 1972; Volume 2 came out in November, 1976.

[163]*Times* (London), November 3, 1976. p. 5.

Furnivall's wedding picture (Bodleian Library, Oxford)

Furnivall portrait—young (Mrs. J. Gordon and Mrs. R. Davies, Furnivall's granddaughters)



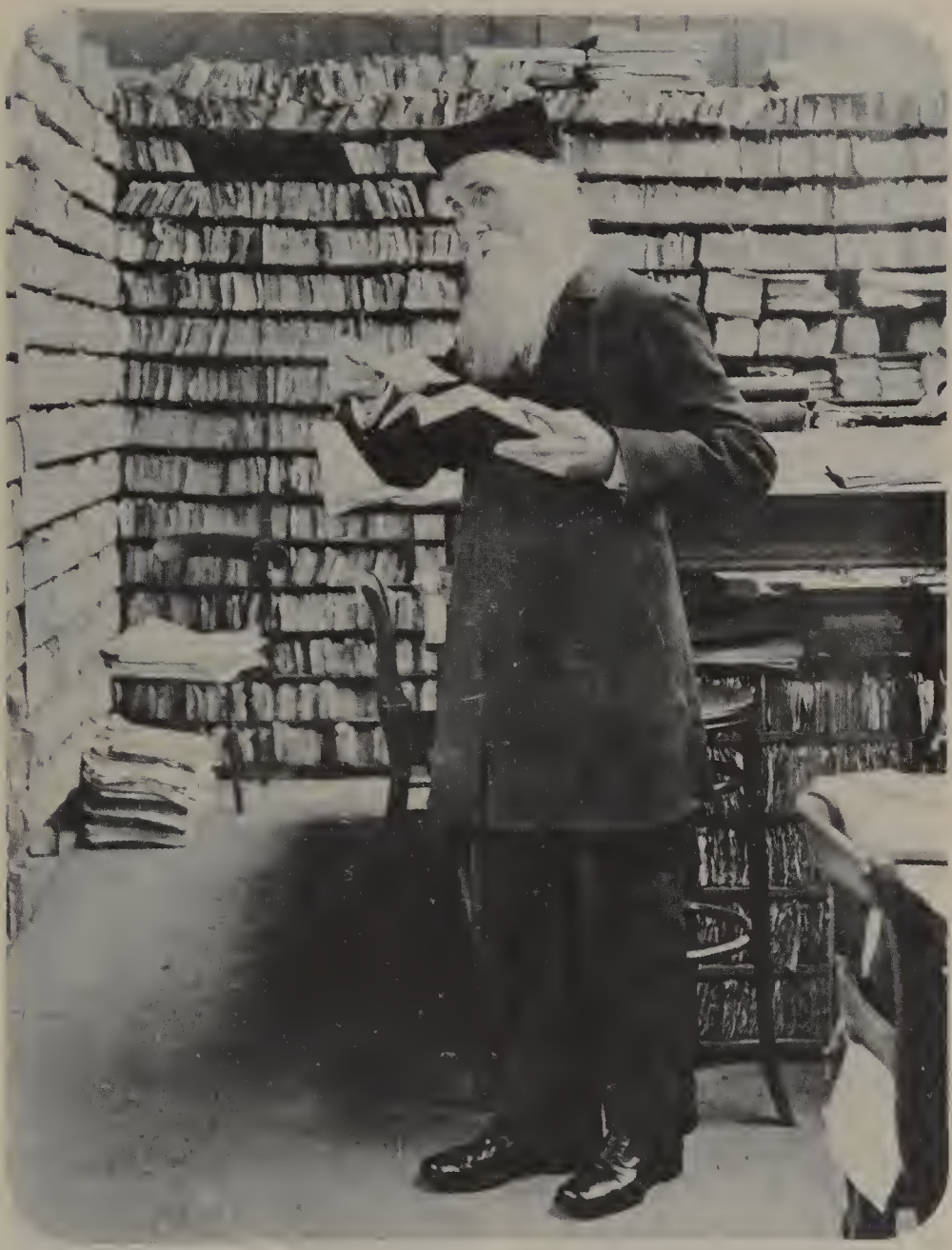
Furnivall portrait—middle-aged (King's College Library, University of London)

Furnivall in forecourt of the Furnivall Sculling Club (taken from John Monro, *Dr. Furnivall: A Personal Record.* London, 1911.)

Furnivall resting on Canbury Island (Mrs. J. Gordon and Mrs. R. Davies)

Left, The club eight coxed by Furnivall (1907) (The British Library)

Furnivall portrait (Mrs. J. Gordon and Mrs. R. Davies)



Sir James Murray portrait (K. M. Elisabeth Murray)

Walter Skeat photographed in his study at 2 Salisbury Villas, Cambridge, England (William Skeat, London—grandson of Walter Skeat)

Henry Bradshaw—portrait (Cambridge University Library)

John Ruskin—portrait (National Portrait Gallery, London)

CHAPTER 5

# Founder of Literary Societies—Early Period

FURNIVALL'S MANY commitments in the 1860s did not stop him from expanding his activities as a scholar adventurer to become the founder of various literary societies in London. This new venture has a special attraction for him, because, as founder, he was the supreme chief of his creations and was able to run them according to his own set of rules. The truth of John Munro's claim that Furnivall was always at his best when he went his own way is seen in the enormous success that the new societies enjoyed. Despite the squabbles, vendettas, and editorial blunders that Furnivall's autocratic methods sometimes produced, his literary societies became the most powerful force in Victorian England for the advancement of English studies, and the Early English Text Society became the crowning achievement of Furnivall's career.

## *The Early English Text Society* (1864)

The founding of the Early English Text Society (EETS) was certainly the direct outcome of the *New English Dictionary*'s urgent need for materials. Furnivall's primary motive in editing early English texts was, however, as in his dictionary work, to make significant to modern Englishmen and Englishwomen the great value of "the story and thought" of their forefathers, which was what had impressed him first when he read Tennyson's *Morte d'Arthur* in 1842.

This romantic emphasis on the past, particularly on the Middle Ages, was, of course, a Victorian phenomenon.[1] Furnivall believed

[1]Richard D. Altick, *Victorian People and Ideas*, p. 102.

that the literature of the past with its ideal representations of human action and character would quicken the noble emotions and moral sensibilities of a society rapidly declining in the face of ever-growing industrialism and capitalism. Indeed, as an agnostic, Furnivall, like John Stuart Mill and others, saw such images of ideal humanity as stimulating admiration, love, and hope among his contemporaries to the extent of providing a substitute for Christianity. As Walter Houghton points out: "In his speech on sanitary reform, [Charles] Kingsley called on every one of his hearers to be 'a knight-errant or lady-errant' even now in the nineteenth century, for the alleviation of misery among the poor is a noble work, a chivalrous work—' just as chivalrous as if you lived in any old fairy land, such as Spenser talked of in his 'Faerie Queene.' Or Malory, he might have said, in his *Morte d' Arthur.*"[2] Reviewing the first ten years' work of the EETS, Furnivall quotes the following words from a "Leader" in the *Daily News* (November 20, 1873) urging people to subscribe to the society:

> In the "Babees Boke," the "Boke of Norture" . . . we may read the very mind of our forefathers, the way in which they regarded the common duties and responsibilities which make up every-day life, their methods of making existence comfortable, gentle, easy, and cultured. . . . And if there linger among us any relics of that most ancient religion, the worship of ancestors, Mr. Furnivall's appeal for help should touch us there.[3]

Since the exclusive Roxburghe Club was hardly the place for democratic Furnivall, from either a social or a publishing standpoint, he was fortunate to have his *Early English Poems and Lives of Saints* printed by the Philological Society in 1858 in place of its normal *Transactions.* In his presidential address to the Philological Society in 1873, Alexander J. Ellis quotes Furnivall's description of the origins of the EETS:

> As the revival of the study of Early English . . . originated with the Philological Society, I may . . . remind our members that delay on the part of our late much-lamented President, Prof. Goldstücker, in producing his Sanscrit Affix paper for our *Transactions* of 1858, led to the printing of my *Early English Poems and Lives of Saints* early in 1862; that this encouraged Dr. Richard

[2]Walter E. Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830-1870*, pp. 319-20.

[3]Walter N. Skeat, ed., *The Bruce*, pp. 9-10.

Morris to edit the *Liber Cure Cocorum* later in 1862; and in 1863 to begin with Hampole's *Pricke of Conscience.*[4]

Further texts edited by members were printed by the society,[5] and there is no reason to suppose that this practice would not have continued or that the Early English Text Society would ever have come into existence if the society's council had not put a stop to it because it was draining the society's financial resources; the council was backed by many members who claimed that philology was not to be confined to the English language.[6]

Some of these publishing activities are described in letters from Furnivall to Henry Bradshaw when the latter was superintendent of manuscripts and later, in 1867, when he was at Cambridge University library. On September 20, 1863, Furnivall informs Bradshaw that

> he [Madden] should be glad to see all his books reprinted except the Havelock which he wants to do in a 12s edition himself. . . . I have to change my rooms this week up Regent St. way—40 Gloster [Gloucester] Crescent if ever you're near there; but 3 Old Sq. will always find me. You owe me two letters & don't I wish I may get 'em. When do you mean to send me the Chaucer Poems & the Paper on him?[7]

Another letter, dated November 21, 1863, welcomes Bradshaw to the Philological Society, and an attached note describes a subcommittee that is to meet at Somerset House on November 28, at 4:30 P.M.:

> Oh, illustrious! You were elected a member of this noble Society called the Philological last night. . . . You write to me, there's a good fellow. And if there's any chance of your coming to town next Saturday, tell me, & come with me to our Committee.

The attached note contains a resolution

> that a Sub-Committee be appointed consisting of H. Bradshaw, Fellow of King's Coll. Camb., R. Morris, D. P. Fry, Furnivall, with power to add to

[4]*Philological Society Transactions*, 1873–74, p. 236. *Early English Poems and Lives of the Saints*, from manuscripts of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, were issued as a supplement to the *Transactions* of 1858. *The Play of the Sacrament* was added to the volume for 1860–61, and the other three texts were bound together with the general title *The Philological Society's Early English Volume, 1862–4.*

[5]For example, in 1862, Whitley Stokes edited for the society *The Play of the Sacrament*; in 1864 Richard F. Weymouth followed with his critical edition of *Castel of Love.*

[6]*Library* 3d ser. 3 (1912):5.

[7]Cambridge University Library, Bradshaw Papers.

> their number to raise a separate Fund to enable the Society to continue its Publications of Early English & to reprint and re-edit well-known Texts as may appear to them sensible.[8]

On December 17, 1863, Furnivall asks Bradshaw: "Will you tell me whether I can have that MS. of Merlin soon? I am just clear of the Graal & want another MS. to go on with."[9] A week later, on December 24, Furnivall writes:

> We have no money in hand at the Philolog. for reprinting or printing MSS. but must raise some somehow, . . . We are in lodgings, & can't give you either bed or other dinner than a chop, but if you'd come for a walk any morning, or be any evening with us, giving me a day or two's notice we should be very glad. There is no chance of our coming to Cambridge yet. Many thanks for all your kind wishes.[10]

When it became clear that no more texts were to be printed, Furnivall prepared at once to go his own way and found a society to carry on the work already started. In a letter to the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1867 (announcing the start of an "Extra Series" of EETS publications), Furnivall recalls:

> When in 1863 he [Richard Morris] was sending extracts from English MSS abroad to be printed in a foreign journal, because there was no journal or society in England to print them, it *did* seem to me a shame, and that if people only knew the fact they would put an end to such a state of things. The result was the getting up of the Early English Text Society, which, to say the least of it, has done some worthy work for our language and literature.[11]

With his usual haste Furnivall produced a prospectus with a preliminary list of twenty-two subscribers at one guinea apiece, which included John Ruskin, who subscribed for ten sets of the publications. The committee of management were Danby Fry, Furnivall, Richard Morris, H. T. Parker (agent for Harvard College), and H. B. Wheatley as honorary secretary. All five were members of the Philological Society and of its council. The first list of members is an impressive one: Lord Tennyson, Archbishop Trench, Bishop Connop Thirlwall,

[8]Cambridge University Library, Bradshaw Papers.

[9]Cambridge University Library, Bradshaw Papers.

[10]Cambridge University Library, Bradshaw Papers, Correspondence, Add. 2591 (1), fol. 213.

[11]*Gentleman's Magazine* 4 (July–December, 1867): 212.

Joseph Bosworth, Henry Bradshaw, George Craik, Dr. Goldstücker, David Laing, George Macdonald, Sir Frederic Madden,[12] Max Müller, Lord Neaves, George Stephens (of Copenhagen), Hensleigh Wedgwood, and many other prominent persons.

It was a triumph for Furnivall. In 1911, Walter Skeat described the founding of the Society:

> Furnivall made the discovery of his life; a discovery but little known, and never likely to be sufficiently appreciated, though it has actually affected the study of English profoundly, not only throughout the British Empire, but beyond it, especially in Germany and in the United States. His discovery amounted to this: that our earliest authors had not been sufficiently exploited, and that many highly important manuscripts had been incorrectly printed and insufficiently glossed, and many more had never been printed at all, and were practically unknown. Having made this all-important discovery, he promptly applied the right remedy by founding the Early English Text Society, which has entirely altered the situation by giving us accurate texts and useful glossaries, abounding with exact references that render most valuable information immediately available.[13]

In founding the EETS, the greatest achievement of his career, Furnivall's shrewdness was twofold: he perceived the real academic need for accurate texts, glossaries, and references for the reasons Skeat states, but he also saw the potential appeal to the Victorians of such a series of texts. It was an appeal not only to their patriotism but to the curious complex of aesthetic, antiquarian, and practical attitudes toward the past which is to be seen in so many Victorian activities.[14] The prominence Furnivall gives to Arthurian texts among the earliest issues betrays his original interest in the undertaking. For example, *Arthur: A Short Sketch of His Life and History*

[12]Madden had reservations about Furnivall's ability to do the work. On Saturday, February 12, 1864, he wrote in his journal: "I received a note from Mr. F. J. Furnivall, enclosing a proof of his Prospectus for the Early English Text Society in which he has introduced a notice of myself I dislike. He says, 'We want a shield against the accusation of pirating your work.' He proposes to print in a cheap and popular form my volumes of *Sir Gawain, William and the Werwolf* and others. I objected to their taking *Havelock* as I hope to do it myself some day or other. I do not think the scheme will succeed, nor do I place much confidence in Mr. F. and his friends. However, I shall subscribe to the undertaking as the *motive* is good, whatever the result is." Bodleian Library, MS Eng. Hist. c. 177, p. 37.

[13]John Munro, *Frederick James Furnivall: A Volume of Personal Record*, p. 177.

[14]A. H. Thorndike, *Literature in a Changing Age*, p. 54.

*in English Verse of the First Half of the 15th Century* was published by Furnivall in 1864, the first year of the EETS. *Arthur* is a brief sketch of the life and wars of the "King of men," found in an incomplete Latin chronicle of the kings of Britain belonging to the marquis of Bath.[15] Also, when Furnivall published *Early English Meals and Manners* (a change of title from the original, *The Babees Book*) in 1868, he concluded his "Forewords" (dated June, 1867):

> If we can do all the English part of the work, and the Master of the Rolls will commission one of his Editors to do the Latin part, we shall then get a fairly complete picture of that Early English Home which, with all its shortcomings, should be dear to every Englishman now.[16]

Woodcuts (from early illuminations) depict fourteenth- and fifteenth-century manners and customs, for example, "Washing Before Dinner," "Receiving a Guest," "A Frugal Repast," "A King at Dinner," and "Night Scene in a Hostelry."

The nineteenth-century historical method included the study of social phenomena of all kinds, institutions, customs, and beliefs as the natural products of a given time and place. Classical sophistication implied for the Victorians a certain degree of imitation and therefore artificiality. The primitive, however, was a form of originality, the "real thing," and in the last analysis could be discovered only through the techniques of historical research. Such a view of literature as the expression of the society and age in which it was written led to the notion espoused by Maurice, Kingsley, and Trench that literature is the expression of a national spirit and, "in some vague way, the creation of a national mind."[17]

In some respects Furnivall was fortunate in deciding to found the EETS when he did. A number of factors favored the formation of such a society in 1864: the new scholarly tradition gave it and later societies a sound excuse for existing; in the *New English Dictionary* there was a demanding market for its products; no important society

[15]See review in *Gentleman's Magazine* 218 (1865): 227. In the same year, 1864, Richard Morris brought out *Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight* and also three alliterative poems by the same author, *Early English Alliterative Poems*.

[16]Frederick James Furnivall, *Early English Meals and Manners*, p. lxviii. See René Wellek, *Discriminations: Further Concepts of Criticism*, p. 151.

[17]Ibid.

had been established since the Percy and Shakespeare societies in 1840, and the latter, the most prominent of all, had since been disgraced by the Collier scandal,[18] which had revealed that works edited by John Payne Collier for the society had been doctored. Also, since earlier text societies had exploited the Elizabethan field fairly thoroughly, Old and Middle English now offered some novelty and excitement to other scholars and editors who realized the need to publish earlier materials. Stephen Potter writes:

> It was not so much the Anglo-Saxon classics which made the mouth water; the most thickly filled veins lay in the transition period between this earlier writing and modern English. "Middle English" it was called: and this phrase *Middle English* in itself held excitement, with its atmosphere of being above such irrelevancies as authors, with its scientific coolness, with its evolutionary emphasis.[19]

Nevertheless, the EETS should not be regarded as just a historical landmark for text and literary societies. It is by far the most important nineteenth-century society of its kind, and it promoted the growth of similar societies.[20] In *A Student's Pastime,* Walter W. Skeat describes other important results of the work of the EETS during its long and useful life. For instance, their editorial work for the society forced scholars to come to grips with the complex question of Early English pronunciation. As Skeat writes, "It was useless to produce texts unless we could correctly pronounce the words which they gave us."[21] Describing the founding of the English Dialect Society,[22] whose

[18]H. R. Steeves, *Learned Societies and English Literary Scholarship*, p. 147.

[19]Stephen Potter, *The Muse in Chains*, p. 174. Madden writes on Thursday, February 18, 1864: "Mr. Furnivall called in my room & brought several MSS. of Chaucer, in order to obtain my opinion of their relative age. I consider the Sloane copy the earliest." Bodleian Library, MS Eng. Hist. c. 177, p. 41.

[20]Skeat, ed. *The Bruce*, p. 8. In his review of the work of the EETS ten years after its founding, Furnivall wrote: "Not only has our Society produced its own fine series of Texts; but it has also given birth to other Societies, whose publications are carrying out its purpose in other directions; to other books that bring its teaching within the reach of every student and boy in the British Empire, the United States, Germany, and Austria. From the Early English Text Society sprang, in 1867, its own Extra Series; in 1868, the printing of the Percy Folio MS.; the Chaucer Society, the Ballad Society, the Spenser Society, and the Roxburghe Library; in 1871 the Hunterian Club; in 1873 the Palaeographical Society, the English Dialect Society, and the New Shakspere Society."

[21]Walter W. Skeat, *A Student's Pastime*, p. xxviii.

[22]The Skeat Papers, King's College Library, outline the history.

purpose was to acquire knowledge of modern English dialects, Skeat writes, "I . . . resolved to follow Dr. Furnivall's example, and to write the necessary prospectus for the formation of such a society."[23]

It is clear from his statements in *A Student's Pastime* that Skeat and Henry Sweet were much more academic and forward-looking than was Furnivall in their attitudes toward English studies. In this respect Furnivall's remark to Roman Dyboski (lecturer in English literature in the Polish University of Cracow), "I never cared a bit for philology," is revealing. Yet although it tends to separate Skeat the scholar from Furnivall the social historian at the outset, it must be emphasized that it was the impulse generated by Furnivall's dynamic energy that drove Skeat and other scholars to achieve what they did.

Furnivall quickly set about organizing the EETS upon the simple business proposition, "I'll furnish the books if you'll pay for them," which was really the eighteenth-century method of publication by subscription. On February 15, 1864, Furnivall wrote with obvious excitement to Sir Frederic Madden, keeper of manuscripts in the British Museum:

> Thank you very much for subscribing to our Society. . . . I believe that we shall succeed to a considerable extent. A publisher has offered to give us a vol. of 400 pages a year for every 50 guineas subscribed. if we will let him print other copies from our types, and sell them at not less a price than the vols. cost the subscribers. With 200, or even 100, subscribers we should soon have a Corpus of Early English Literature that will be a great boon to the generation that follows us. I hope you'll give us *Havelock* soon. Oxford will do Malory's Arthur as well as the Chaucer, I believe.[24]

Madden, however, was far from satisfied with an early specimen of the society's work. On Saturday, March 12, 1864, he writes in his journal:

[23]Skeat, *A Student's Pastime*, p. xxxi. Furnivall did some work for the Dialect Society: his edition of *An Early English Hymn to the Virgin* was published in 1880. He was also involved in the arrangements for the publication of *English Dialect Dictionary* (1896), "founded mainly on the publications of the English Dialect Society." According to Winternitz, it was Skeat and Furnivall "who most urgently asked" Joseph Wright to undertake the editing of the vast materials. On January 11, 1896, Furnivall wrote to Wright: "Napier came in and told us (Council Meeting of the Philological Society) that you'd had to take the whole risk of the venture on your own shoulders. . . . we rejoicet that you had resolved to carry it thro'. . . . I unluckily haven't a £5 note invested, so I cannot help you; and I'm too ignorant of fonetics to do Dialect work. I can only honour you for your unselfishness & your pluck. Yorkshire is fine stuff." E. M. Wright, *Life of Joseph Wright*, 2:393-94.

[24]British Library, Eg. MS 2848, fol. 50.

> Mr. Bond brought to me the Cotton MS. Nero AX (from which I printed the alliterative poem of Gawayne) and a sheet of transcript from it, made by Mr. R. Morris, one of Mr. Furnivall's *collaborateurs,* as Editor of works to be published by the Early English Text Society. If this sheet of transcript (submitted by Mr. Rich. Morris to Mr. Bond for correction) is a specimen of his usual accuracy, then it is evident that the works edited by him will be not only worthless but highly mischievous! In the compass of half a page, I never saw such a number of ignorant and shameful misreadings of the text, or *conjectural* words inserted instead of real ones! I feel thoroughly disgusted at such a prospect of Editorship.[25]

Such early carelessness was largely the result of haste. Almost as soon as the society came into existence, texts were speedily sent to the press with the result that four books were soon ready for the 1864 subscription. Furnivall wrote in the society's report for January, 1865, "Though the Society started late in the past year, these four texts were published within a fortnight of its close, and before that time the first text for the second year was in the printer's hands."[26] This haste, of course, reflects Furnivall's enthusiasm and drive, qualities that were essential for the effective planning and execution of the society's business, but qualities that also produced, especially at the start, a tendency to rush into print without enough regard to editorial accuracy.

Nevertheless, Furnivall ran the EETS efficiently from its foundation until his death forty-six years later. He maintained a steady rate of publication, co-opted scholars from home and abroad in a concentration of editorial effort, and gave the society's texts international prestige.[27] In its first century of operation (1864–1964), the EETS published nearly four hundred texts. Israel Gollancz succeeded Furnivall as director, and was succeeded in turn by A. W. Pollard, R. W. Chambers, C. T. Onions, and Norman Davis. On January 22, 1868, Skeat wrote to Furnivall:

[25]Bodleian Library, MS Eng. Hist. c. 177, p. 58. See also Bodleian Library, MS Eng. Hist. c. 180, p. 206.

[26]*Library*, 3d ser. 3 (1912): 7.

[27]On October 8, 1864, Furnivall wrote to Bradshaw, "Have you read the W$^{m}$ & the Werwolf with the MS. for our Early English Text Soc$^{y}$, underlining the expansions of abbreviations, if any?" Cambridge University Library, Bradshaw Papers, Correspondence, Add. 2591 (1), fol. 238.

> Now that this last year's issue is out—in which I know you have taken such deep interest, I hope you'll allow me, as a most sincere well-wisher, to congratulate you on the state of things and to thank you very heartily in particular for all *your own personal* exertions; for I believe that, after all, we owe you very much, and that the general public hardly perceives from the List of Texts, how much trouble you really take; and how much work you do that hardly *appears.* Your "go-a-head-itiveness" puzzles me sometimes, but it's *an element of success,* so go-ahead, old fellow, say I, and good luck go with you.[28]

As founder-director of the EETS, Furnivall was far from being a nominal head; rather, it was the society's twenty-member Committee of Management that was nominal. Of course, to carry out wholesale publication, Furnivall relied upon the cooperation and administrative responsibility of a great many fellow workers. As the executive body, the Committee of Management had naturally some say in the operation of the society: it selected the publications and appointed the editors and could ignore both suggestions made by subscribers regarding works to be published and critical assessments made by subscribers of texts undertaken by the society.

Other clubs conducted their affairs rather differently. The Camden Society, the Shakespeare Society, and the Scottish Text Society always sought their members' advice and guidance in these matters; the Bannatyne Club even published lists of desiderata and had their members vote democratically on the various questions to be decided.[29] The EETS membership had no vote at all. This autocratic way of running the society, apart from reflecting once again Furnivall's peculiar brand of democracy, probably arose out of the society's aims and purposes, which were very different from those of the other text societies. The EETS set out to print an entire body of Early and Middle English literature and linguistic material, whereas the publication of texts by other societies was a highly selective affair in that their texts represented or illustrated a large field of possibilities, and judgment was very much more relevant. The EETS, embracing and trying to exhaust an entire field of literature, was obviously far more concerned with seizing opportunities when they arose (for instance, offers of manuscripts, of copies, or of editorial help and proposals),

[28]King's College Library, Furnivall Papers, See also *Nation* 91 (July, 1910):28.

[29]Steeves, *Learned Societies*, pp. 163–64.

than with voting on questions of the selection and order of publication of texts which were all going to be published anyway. It is likely, as Steeves remarks, that, given the choice, Furnivall's subscribers would have seized the "plums" among the texts and abandoned the indifferent remainder for lesser minds—to the almost certain impoverishment and possible demise of the society.[30]

Nevertheless, according to Steeves, one reason for the relative unpopularity of the society in the early days was the "bumptiousness" and autocracy of Furnivall himself. Steeves writes:

> As strongly endeared as he was to his near friends by exceptional personal qualities, he possessed other qualities—summed up in the word "bumptiousness" by one of the distinguished English scholars of the time who could not work in harmony with him—which cost him the affection, and even the tolerance, of many men of attainments who otherwise would probably have been glad to aid his projects. His constant bullying, for instance, of some of the old Shakespeare Society group, must have prejudiced his undertakings in the public mind and made him appear as a rather irritating apostle of scholarly integrity.[31]

Steeves adds in a footnote:

> I am not speaking wholly at random here. A collection of correspondence to and from the Rev. Joseph Woodfall Ebsworth, which is now in my possession, contains comments from Furnivall's acquaintances upon the value of the personal equation in the Furnivall projects which are not strictly in harmony with the opinions expressed by his friends in the memorial volume.[32]

The inconsistency in Furnivall's conduct—in this particular instance between bullying tactics and democratic cooperative principles—did not trouble him. The end result was all that really mattered. One reason that his domineering behavior was not even more evident in his Working Men's College activities is that for the most part he was held in check by his hero John Ludlow. Outside Ludlow's sphere of influence he had a free hand. For instance, when at an annual general meeting of the Hammersmith Sculling Club, chaired by

[30]Ibid.

[31]Ibid., p. 160.

[32]Ibid.

Furnivall, lengthy discussion produced a vote that went contrary to the chairman's wishes on the question of the cost of repairs, Furnivall simply announced, "Well, I'm the tenant of the house, so I shall do as I like and pay the cost myself."[33]

There were, however, other reasons than Furnivall's personality for the obvious reluctance of some people to become EETS members and subscribers. For one thing, despite his careful choice of material, the nature of at least some of the texts that the society undertook to produce during the early days was rather limited in general appeal. Steeves makes the point well when he claims that even the most patriotic and enlightened Englishman could not be expected "to take with his Chaucer and Cynewulf reams upon reams of homilies, dull metrical romances, interminable didactic poems, saints' lives, cook books and surgical treatises."[34] This did not stop Furnivall from grumbling that "the society's experience has shown the very small number of those inheritors of the speech of Cynewulf, Chaucer and Shakspere, who care two guineas a year for the records of that speech." And in the preface to his edition of *The Stacions of Rome,* he blasts in "bow-wow" fashion, reminiscent of Matthew Arnold:

> To the public . . . I should say, what a very stupid public it is for not supporting more vigorously the best and most liberal Early English Printing Society [the EETS] that has ever existed: that there are several thousand well-to-do men in this country who can easily spare a guinea each to make their forefathers' speech and thoughts better known to this and future generations; and they ought so to spare it.[35]

There was much more justification for his critical comparison with another society on the question of the viability of the EETS: ". . . it is nothing less than a scandal that the Hellenic Society should have over a thousand members, while the E.E.T.S. has not three hundred."

Furnivall expected Victorians to seize the golden opportunity to learn about their glorious forefathers. But the EETS, like any other society, required time to establish itself. The demand for texts was

[33]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. 24.

[34]Steeves, *Learned Societies*, p. 159.

[35]Frederick James Furnivall, *The Stacions of Rome*, p. ix.

there, as the subsequent success of the venture was to prove,[36] but Furnivall did not like to be kept waiting. In a letter to W. Carew Hazlitt, dated October 23, 1865, Furnivall wrote: "You above all men ought to join the E.E.T.S. . . . We have now 250 subscribers, shall give 7 texts (or parts) this year, and must go ahead. The big reprints must wait, tho' I want Malory done. . . . Can you get us some subscribers?"[37] During the following year Furnivall tried again to cajole Hazlitt into becoming a member: "You ought to join the E.E.T.S. We'll give you tick. All the Gawaines are sure to be gone, and if you don't join us soon, you'll not be able to buy a copy, for we are nearly sold out."[38]

Furnivall's resilience in the face of various discouragements was vital in those early years of the EETS; for instance, when the *Athenaeum* complained in 1865 that the new society should have restricted its activities to texts "hitherto inedited" and that its last publication, *Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight,* was a "waste of power,"[39] Furnivall retaliated in the following week's issue:

> You say that our re-editing scarce printed texts is a "waste of power." Now this is all very well for you with the resources of the *Athenaeum* at your back. If you want a four-guinea book to refer to for a word you can send out and buy it, or tell a clerk to go to the Museum. . . . But take the ordinary students of Early English, whose spare minutes for Museum work (if he lives in town) are few, and his guineas to buy texts with fewer. . . . you would not think it "waste of power" to put the text you wanted or cared for within the reach of 500 people, at the cost of from ten to twenty shillings. . . . we want to make "household words" of the names of the early men and books we delight in, and specially to print all they have written and contain about Arthur.[40]

[36]H. V. Routh writes: "They [the Victorians] reflect the hesitation and doubtfulness of this age of transition in their tendency to refer to the Past for a comparison. Ruskin was prophesying 'There will come a time . . . when it will be found that the same practical results both in mental discipline and in political philosophy are to be attained by the accurate study of the Middle Ages, and modern as well as of ancient history.' Unmistakable examples of the same tendencies are to be found in the popularity of historical novels and in the impulse which led Frederick James Furnivall to found the Early English Text Society in 1864." H. V. Routh, *Money, Morals, Manners Revealed in Modern Literature*, p. 45.

[37]British Library, MS 38898, fol. 307.

[38]British Library, MS 38899, fol. 70.

[39]*Athenaeum*, January, 1865, p. 90.

[40]Ibid., p. 128.

By January, 1867, the society's position had somewhat improved, and Furnivall's *Third Annual Report of the Early English Text Society Committee* shows that, since 1864, the society had increased its annual income from 152 pounds to 681 pounds, its yearly publication of texts from four to eleven, its members from 145 to 409. And Furnivall had every right to boast that "never before has any Society of a like kind, in any year, given to the public such a variety and amount of the records of early English thought and work."[41] Yet the urgent need for new subscribers remained, and the same report criticizes the failure of members to recruit more and points out the need for close cooperation:

> Our Publisher has been very zealous in the Society's behalf, and his last list numbers 33 subscribers. Now this is working for editors, as editors work for members; and when once this spirit animates the whole of our subscribers, a real beginning will be made to the work the Society has set itself—the bringing to light the whole of the hidden springs of the noble Literature that England calls its own.[42]

Max Müller, of Oxford University, sent a sympathetic note to Furnivall on June 25, 1867:

> It is a great shame that men who have to work day after day and night after night to make a guinea should be called upon to support what is in every sense of the word a national undertaking, while the great noblemen of the realm and the rich merchants of the city pass on without heeding your appeal.[43]

Madden was not prepared to offer Furnivall such support. On Wednesday, March 25, 1868, he writes in his journal:

> I never saw Mr. Skeat in my life but from the whole tenor of his correspondence I feel a great respect for him. As to that jackanapes Mr. Furnivall, I think it is a matter of great regret he should be allowed to edit any works of

[41] *Early English Text Society Annual Report*, January, 1867, p. 1.

[42] Ibid., p. 4. Furnivall must have been greatly cheered to discover in 1867 that one little mutual-improvement club in Sunderland made up of six workmen—a cork-cutter, two wood-carvers in the shipyards, a watchmaker, an engine fitter, and a painter of photographs—was specializing in collecting old ballads. Their ambition was to subscribe to the publications of the Early English Text Society, "so soon as work gets better." J. M. Ludlow and L. Jones, *The Progress of the Working Class, 1832-1867*, p. 180.

[43] Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 689.

> the Society. His style of writing is thoroughly disgusting, and his ignorance is on a par with his bad taste.[44]

On July 30, he writes:

> I received a note from that coxcomb Furnivall, asking for information respecting MSS. of Chaucer. He wants to trace some of those mentioned by Tyrwhitt. . . . I do not choose to take any trouble for a fellow like F. and I wonder he is not ashamed to write to me after his base conduct in 1866.[45]

The last is a reference to Furnivall's support of William Stubbs for the post of principal librarian in the British Museum, which provoked Madden's hostility toward Furnivall because Madden wanted the post himself. Madden records some of the details of this peculiar affair in his journal. It is clear from the account he gives that Furnivall soon realized the mistake he had made in offending the useful Madden and tried to wriggle out of it. He quickly offered reasons for having given a testimonial to Stubbs, but they were so specious that they merely made matters worse. For instance, Furnivall claimed that the testimonial was meant to apply not to the British Museum librarianship but to the one at the Lambeth Library, which had been held by Stubbs since 1862 and was about to be reviewed by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners.[46] In an attempt to bring about a rapprochement with Madden, Furnivall sent him a Roxburghe book as a gift. The implacable Madden, however, returned the peace offering unopened.[47]

The call for more members and more funds was made again in the EETS Committee's *Seventh Report* in February, 1871. This time the appeal was couched in patriotic and moral terms reminiscent of Maurice and Kingsley in the 1850's and put in the context of "the Great War of 1870":

> The absorbing interest of the Great War of 1870 has stopt the increase of the Society during the past year. But the love of Fatherland . . . justifies the Committee in referring with renewed emphasis to the memorable words of

[44]Bodleian Library, MS Eng. Hist. c. 180, p. 294.

[45]Bodleian Library, MS Eng. Hist. c. 181, p. 46.

[46]Bodleian Library, MS Eng. Hist. c. 179, pp. 106, 150–51. See also, W. H. Hutton, *William Stubbs, 1825–1910*, p. 38.

[47]Bodleian Library, MS Eng. Hist. c. 179, p. 155. For a brief account of Furnivall's dealings with Madden, see R. W. Ackerman and G. P. Ackerman, *Sir Frederick Madden: A Biographical Sketch and Bibliography*, p. 27.

> Professor Seeley, quoted in their 1868 Report, p.6. "Classical studies may make a man intellectual, but the study of the native literature has a moral effect as well. *It is the true ground and foundation of patriotism.* . . . I call that man uncivilized who is not connected with the past through the state in which he lives, and sympathetic with the great men who have lived in it." The Committee again declare that they take no lower ground for the Society's work than this. Not dilettante Antiquarianism, but duty to England is the motive of the Society's workers.[48]

These sentiments are certainly as much Furnivall's as Seeley's and lie at the very heart of his sociopolitical philosophy and his nineteenth-century medievalism. The patriotic cry is heard again in a statement about his object in founding the EETS, which was that Englishmen might be able to say of their own early literature what the Germans could say about theirs: "Every work of it is printed, and every word of it is glossed."[49] In a letter to Henry Bradshaw on January 8, 1868, Furnivall wrote: "The master of the Charterhouse School said the other day to a boy, 'What is this Early English Text Society? I've never heard of it in England, but I see it in every German book I take up now. Ask your father if he can tell me anything about it?' 1 to the Germans!"[50]

By 1910 the result of Furnivall's noble aims was a library of about 250 volumes containing the whole range of medieval knowledge, all annotated with the help of the latest scholarship. So vast was the production that it is difficult to categorize and classify the various branches of knowledge involved. H. B. Wheatley, honorary secretary of the EETS at the time, suggested the following breakdown:

1. Books of recognised literary importance
2. Arthurian and other Romances
3. Old English Drama
4. Religious Treatises

[48]*Early English Text Society Annual Report*, February, 1871, pp. 1-2.

[49]To execute his plan, Furnivall had four main objectives: (1) publication of the best text of each work, with full information about the position of the book in the history of English language and literature, glossary and index being provided; (2) production of a body of authoritative early quotations for the use of the Philological Society's *New English Dictionary*; (3) collection of materials for the history of English language and literature; and (4) collection of materials for the history of the social condition of the country at different periods.

[50]Cambridge University Library, Bradshaw Papers, Correspondence, Add. 2591 (3), fol. 449.

5. Manners, including Old Surgery
6. Dictionaries and Grammatical Tracts.[51]

Of the works in the first category Skeat's great edition of *Piers Plowman* is undoubtedly the most notable. In 1866 he published *Parallel Extracts from 29 MSS of Piers Plowman* to provide a preliminary survey of the work, and this was reworked in 1885 as *Parallel Extracts from 45 MSS of Piers Plowman.* Text A came out in 1867, text B in 1869, and text C in 1873. The first portion of part 4, containing the notes to texts A, B, and C, was published in 1867, and in 1884, *Piers Plowman Notes, Glossary, Etc. Part IV* completed the work.

In 1867, Furnivall had gone to Cambridge to copy the Caxton text of his forthcoming edition of Caxton's *Book of Curtesye,* and in the Preface to that edition he reports that

> before tea, Mr. Skeat showed me the copy of *The Vision of Piers Plowman* which the Provost and Fellows of Oriel had been good enough to lend him for his edition of "Text B." Having enjoyed the vellum Vision, I turned to the paper leaves at its end, and what should they contain but an earlier and better version of the Caxton that I had just copied part of? I drank seven cups of tea, and eat five or six large slices of bread and butter, in honour of the event; and Mr. Skeat, with his never-failing kindness, undertook to copy and edit the Oriel text for the Society.[52]

At the end of the preface Furnivall "chats" with his readers:

> I have no more to say: but, readers, remember this coming New Year to do more than last for what Dr. Stratmann calls "the dear Old English." Think of Chaucer when his glad spring comes, and every day besides; forget not Langland or any of our early men;
>
> reporte
>
> and revyue *the* lawde of the*m* tha*t* were famovs in owr*e* langage, these faders dere, whose sowles *in* blis, god eter*n*all avaunce, *t*hat lysten so owr*e* langage to enhavnce![53]

[51]*Library* 3d ser. 3 (1912): 9. This list treats both "Original" and "Extra" Series as one and contains publications up to 1910.

[52]Frederick James Furnivall, ed., *Caxton's Book of Curtesye, printed at Westminster About 1477-8 A.D.* (London, 1868), pp. v-vi.

[53]Ibid., pp. xi-xii.

A great deal of discussion about the authorship of *Piers Plowman* followed the publication of Skeat's edition, and the various arguments of the scholars were put before the EETS membership. Henry Bradley and R. W. Chambers were still debating the issue in the *Modern Language Review*[54] at the time of Furnivall's death, and a reference is made to the controversy by Bradley in Munro's *Furnivall*:

> In April 1909, when I gave my annual report on my dictionary work to the Philological Society, I spent the evening and the following morning with [Furnivall]. . . . He showed no sign of the failure that was so near at hand. He discussed the Piers Plowman question and many other matters of literary controversy.[55]

In October, 1867, *Athenaeum* reports that Skeat's edition of "Peres the Ploughman's Crede" for the EETS had been chosen by the Reverend Edwin Abbot, headmaster of the City of London School, as the textbook for his senior English class. The *Athenaeum* praises Abbot for teaching this class himself, because the popular notion that "any one can teach English" had resulted in a state of affairs parodied by the anecdote of "the Cambridge Wrangler, who, on hearing Shakespeare's name, exclaimed, 'Shakespeare, Who's Shakespeare?' "[56] The importance of EETS texts for the advancement of English studies could hardly have been better emphasized by a leading Victorian journal.

Other outstanding publications in Wheatley's first division include the volume of the autotypes of the unique Cotton manuscript of *Beowulf,* edited by Julius Zupitza, professor of English in Berlin University and a close friend of Furnivall; a seventeenth-century Saxon-Latin dictionary produced and edited by Henry Sweet in folio form as an extra volume in 1883; Israel Gollancz's edition of *The Exeter Book* in 1895; Sweet's edition of King Alfred's West

[54]Henry Bradley, *The Authorship of Piers Plowman.*

[55]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. 8. The next year J. J. Jusserand wrote from Washington, D.C.: "A letter came in January last, one of many dealing with the *Piers Plowman* controversy (in which we were fighting on opposite sides); it ended thus: 'On December 19 I turned giddy on the top of some stairs at a Richmond Restaurant, fell down, and cut my head open for an inch; but luckily took no harm. I was able to scull home, and the wound has healed nicely.' " Ibid., p. 93.

[56]*Athenaeum*, October, 1867, p. 435. Leslie A. Marchand writes: "In the scholarly field there were frequent papers, letters, and reviews by Skeat, Furnivall, Sweet and Trevelyan. Skeat and Furnivall reviewed each other's books in the *Athenaeum*, and contributed numerous papers on their discoveries in Anglo-Saxon and Chaucerian scholarship." *The Athenaeum: A Mirror of Victorian Culture*, p. 90.

Saxon version of the *Pastoral Care* of Pope Gregory I (1871); Bede's *Ecclesiastical History,* edited by Thomas Miller (1890); and *Aelfric's Lives of Saints,* edited by Skeat (1881).[57]

In Wheatley's second division is the great cycle of Arthurian romances, made popular at the time by the poetic visions of Tennyson. The *Gentleman's Magazine,* reviewing Furnivall's *Arthur* and Richard Morris's *Alliterative Poems* (1864), lavishes praise on the EETS for making such texts available to the general public and for editing them with such meticulous care and "one might almost say, tenderness."[58] The *Saturday Review* was not so ecstatic about the efforts of Furnivall and Morris to propagate the treasures of England's literary past:

> As matters of philological study, we are ready to receive texts about King Arthur or about any other subject under heaven but in any other point of view, we must confess that we are tired of King Arthur. . . . We must confess that we do not enter into the apparently prevalent love of everything Arthurian for its own sake.

Then follows an appraisal of *The Pearl:*

> . . . the first poem, called by Mr. Morris "The Pearl," is one of those visions of Paradise of which we have already seen so many. . . . what strikes the ordinary reader at first sight is the extreme difficulty, and what we would call the uncouthness, of language in these poems.[59]

Such reviews help illustrate the problems Furnivall faced in getting the EETS off the ground.[60] Yet according to Merle Mowbray Bevington,

[57]In this class also are the earliest English translation of the first three books of the *De Imitatione Christi* of Thomas a Kempis, edited by J. E. Ingram; *The English Works of Wyclif,* until then unprinted, edited by F. D. Matthew; and John Barbour's *Brus,* edited by Skeat. Publication of Sir David Lyndsay's *Works* began in 1865; *Complaynt of Scotland,* edited by Sir James Murray, came out in 1872 and 1873; and Furnivall himself published William Lauder's *Minor Poems* in 1870.

[58]*Gentleman's Magazine,* n.s. 18 (February, 1865): 227–28. The *Athenaeum* reports in 1870 that "the Archbishop of Canterbury, at the special instance of Archbishop Trench, recognised the value of Mr. Richard Morris's editions of Early English works and his investigations into the early history of the forms of our inflextions, etc. by conferring on him the degree of LLD. Dr. Morris is one of the mainstays of the Early English Text Society, and his series of grammars of our early dialects, in the prefaces to his editions for that Society are the most valuable that we possess." *Athenaeum,* May, 1870, p. 711.

[59]Steeves, *Learned Societies,* pp. 159–60.

[60]These publications in the "Romance" category were followed by *Lancelot of the Laik, Morte Arthur, The Prose Romance of Merlin, Joseph of Arimathie, or the Holy Grail,* Henry Lovelich's *Holy Grail,* and his *Merlin.* Other romances were *William of Palerne, or*

in *The Saturday Review, 1855-1868,* "Although no one identified as an active reviewer was listed in the membership of the Society up to 1868, the *Saturday* was at first friendly in its praise of the project, and in the first four years reviewed at least twenty-two of the thirty-five publications which bear a date of 1868 or earlier."[61] Bevington refers to the above review from *Saturday Review* and explains that the Teutonic bias in its historical criticism accounts for its objection to the special interest of the EETS in Arthurian legend and claims that the editors and readers were confusing mythology and history: "A fifteenth-century romance may tell something about its own century, but proves nothing about the days of Arthur."[62]

Another source of trouble in reviewing the society's work is by now a familiar one:

> Unfortunately, most of the reviews after the first two years are marred by the injection of personalities in a quarrel between F. J. Furnivall and the reviewer of the Texts. . . . They give the reader an adequate idea of the editing, but only after abuse of Furnivall, whether for his ignorance of history or for insinuating Protestant, anti-Puseyite sentiments into a facetious Preface.[63]

From the start there had been "some condescension" toward Furnivall from the reviewers, but things came to a head when the review on December 22, 1866, of *Political, Religious and Love Poems,* edited by Furnivall, attacked his bad taste in narrating his troubles with a critic, in this case Bradshaw, who had called the volume a "pig-stye." Furnivall replied to the review by pointing out that if he were writing to the *Saturday Review's* reviewer (whom he correctly identified as E. A. Freeman) he would use a different tone. He would ask of "the chief Cook who presides over the makings of the weekly pudding that tickles so many palates and disturbs so many inwards, that he should pick out the bits of grit in the dab of pabulum contributed to his seventh-day compound by the reviewer I have been addressing."[64]

*William and the Werwolf, Havelock the Dane, Kyng Horn, Sir Bevis of Hamtoun, Guy of Warwick, Thomas of Ercildoun, Generydes,* the *Laud Troy Book, The Gest-Hystoriale of the Destruction of Troy,* and the series of Charlemagne Romances. In the old manuscripts of Lovelich the letters *u* and *n* were identical and caused the transcribers great trouble; for many years the author's name was printed "Lonelich."

[61]Merle Mowbray Bevington, *The Saturday Review, 1855-68,* p. 251.

[62]Ibid., p. 252.

[63]Ibid., pp. 252-53.

[64]Ibid., p. 262, and n.62.

Furnivall also tells the *Saturday Review* that "it would be better employed in trying to arouse educated Englishmen from their disgraceful apathy to the work of the struggling society, than in picking out minor errors to exercise a reviewer's 'fancied cleverness.' "[65]

One early "romance" publication has an interesting story behind it. For a long time it had been known that the descendants of Bishop Thomas Percy still had in their possession the unique Percy Folio, a manuscript in mid-seventeenth-century handwriting which is the most important source of British ballad literature, the basis of Francis James Child's collection, and the main source of Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry,* a collection of ballads, sonnets, historical songs, and metrical romances published in 1765. Over the years access to the manuscript had been strictly limited to a few close family friends. Although it was not an Early English text, Furnivall, urged on by the American ballad scholar Child, of Harvard University, tried persistently over a period of six years to obtain the hidden manuscript. Eventually he succeeded, and with J. W. Hales he printed and edited the Percy Folio in its entirety.[66] In a letter to the *Gentleman's Magazine,* Furnivall presents the "Proposal for the Publication of Bishop Percy's Ballad Manuscript." He requests funds for obtaining and printing the manuscript and then dangles a carrot to make the subscription more attractive. Subscribers will receive printed copies, including two dozen hitherto unpublished songs,

> "loose but humourous" as the bishop calls them, marked by him with three crosses . . . ; [these] will be printed separately from the other poems, as an appendix that can be detached by anyone who objects to these songs, or wishes to make his volume a drawing room book. To the student these songs and the like are part of the evidence as to the character of a past age, and they should not be kept back from him.

Furnivall also describes his own editorial policy:

> By the bishop's own showing, he altered his manuscripts at discretion. . . . By the way of justification the bishop tells his readers that "his object was to please both the judicious antiquary and the reader of taste; and he hath endeavoured to gratify both without offending either." Now "in a polished age like the

[65]Ibid.

[66]It was not published by the EETS, as some writers have stated. For an account of Thomas Percy (1729–1811) and the *Reliques*, see Arthur Johnston, *Enchanted Ground.*

present" as Percy described his own time, a judicious antiquary (unlike Ritson) might possibly be pleased with such treatment of manuscripts as the bishop's was; but in an age which (like our Victorian) has thank Heaven, lost that kind of polish, a judicious antiquary would get judiciously furious at such tampering with a text, and demand imperatively the very words of the manuscript. After their production he might listen to any retouching and additions of editions, clever or foolish, but not before.[67]

Furnivall's horror at prunings and clarifications and his insistence upon reproducing the original mistakes and incorrect arrangements of texts and so forth in a manuscript are seen also in his edition of *The Complaynt of Criste: Political, Religious and Love Poems,* which was the occasion of Bradshaw's attack in the *Saturday Review.* The scholarly Bradshaw had no time for Furnivall's antiquarian and sociological bias in such matters. Furnivall was adamant, however, and in the Preface manages to fire a broadside at his critic:

I am sorry that the way in which the text of one of these Poems is here printed, led one learned and much-esteemed friend, Henry Bradshaw,—who (unluckily for us) devoted his spare energy to denouncing the Committee in general and me in particular, instead of editing texts for us all—into calling this volume a pig-stye. Admitting that beings of the species "gruntare, *grunnitor*" can find space for the exercise of their calling within the leaves of the book, I yet believe that, as the matter stood, it was right to leave the first part of the even-page text of The Complaynt of Criste (pp. 190, 192, 194, 196, 198), as the scribe copied it. . . . Was this poor text . . . to be cancelled; or to be corrected by the good one opposite it, and retained: or was it to be left as an instructive instance to readers in general, and a caution to careless people like myself, of how one of those scribes to whom we owe almost all our knowledge of our forefathers' minds, had chanced to go astray?[68]

Two years later, on July 16, 1868, Furnivall wrote to Bradshaw: "I hope you'll die a horrible death if you persist in putting Chaucer into . . . uniform spelling. I believe now that the desire for uniformity proceeds from your being a ritualist & a Fellow. Such a being must be up to mischief."[69]

[67]*Gentlemen's Magazine* 222 (January, 1867): 87. See *Spectator*, June, 1867, p. 724.

[68]Frederick James Furnivall, ed., *The Complaynt of Criste: Political, Religious and Love Poems*, p. xviii.

[69]Cambridge University Library, Bradshaw Papers, Correspondence, Add. 2591 (3), fol. 590.

In this "the heyday of scientific and conscientious recovery of England's literary past," Furnivall and many other philologists were only mildly interested in questions of evaluation and criticism. They were concerned with the restoration and rehabilitation of their texts, and any scruples about literary value that had obviously bothered Bishop Percy were easily answered: scientific method demanded authenticity, and literary value *was* the authentic primitive purity of the text. Like Thomas Carlyle, who presented his views on this matter in his essay "Biography" (1832), Furnivall regarded historical fact as far more significant and more valuable than any brilliantly conceived fictitious event in the poetry of Chaucer, Shakespeare, or any other great imaginative artist. He could never accept the premise that great art was truer than reality. He mistrusted the poetic medium. He had anchored himself firmly in a natural, concrete world that was free of speculation and, for him at least, represented truth. Nowhere is his concern for facts more apparent or better illustrated than in his proud boast of his failure to be interested in Browning's poems:

> The interest [in Browning's *Essay on Shelley*] lay in the fact that Browning's "utterances" here are *his*, and not those of any one of the "so many imaginary persons" behind whom he insists on so often hiding himself, and whose necks I, for one, should continually like to wring, whose bodies I would fain kick out of the way, in order to get face to face with the poet himself, and hear his own voice speaking his own thoughts, man to man, soul to soul. Straight speaking, straight hitting, suit me best.[70]

The Percy Folio was dedicated to Child, who had insisted that "it was the duty of English antiquarian men of letters to print this foundation document of English balladry." Munro describes how affronted Furnivall was that an American should be more concerned than an Englishman about an English manuscript, particularly since "in this case the genuineness or falsity of the text of a score of our best ballads was involved." Munro adds that "we may pause also to remark his [Furnivall's] words on 'that keeping back of the evidence you find, and as you find it, which a taste that calls itself polished, a puritanism which calls itself pure, so often demands of men who should care first for facts.' " Munro concludes: "It is a significant utterance, because

[70]*Browning Society Papers*, no. 1 (1881).

prudery often beckoned him to silence; and in his honest, vigorous, and impulsive way, he turned on her with foil thrusts of derision, and spoke more boldly and more plainly."[71]

Munro might have gone on to show how the same bluntness and boldness led to Furnivall's unpopularity with many conventional Victorian scholars and gentlemen. His hatred of sham, artificiality, and "polish" stemmed from his obsession with facts and reality—an obsession which, of course, led to unguarded speech and crude language, as well as conduct that at times was alien to that of most Victorians. His preoccupation with facts was in part the result of his training as a scientist and mathematician. More important than his scientific bent, however, was his intense need as a lapsed evangelical to believe in *something.* For Furnivall, only reality was true. Related to this vigorous pursuit of facts—the product of religious anxiety and the will to believe—was his total immersion in practical activities: searching manuscripts for an ideal past, forming societies and scholarly fraternities, lionizing great "heroes," and building for future generations of English men and women. One telling example of Furnivall's position is his attitude toward imaginative literature, reflected here in his reaction to Bishop Percy's refinement of the Percy manuscript.[72] Finally, it is interesting that, while Furnivall is fond of using metaphors in his own prose, they are nearly always drawn from sporting and other down-to-earth activities that he knew and understood. "Off your own bat"; "if mine [Furnivall's prefaces] buck or shy now and then, I ask their riders to sit steady, and take it easy"; "I had not time to fish for more"; and so on. Typically his figures get out of hand when they become too realistic: "To put forward Aprile [in Browning's *Paracelsus*] as representative of the Renaissance spirit seemed to him like taking a smart young man you meet in Hyde Park as a representative of the best sculler or the best football player in England."[73]

[71]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. li.

[72]Referring to Furnivall's work with Zupitza, Alois Brandl comments: "They were not always of one mind. Zupitza insisted on critical editions, and Furnivall would not hear of them—'doctored editions' he called them. Zupitza was mainly concerned with accuracy of text and rhyme—investigations, Furnivall went mainly for the human and sociological interest of the matter." Ibid., p. 14.

[73]*Browning Society Papers* (1881–1891) 2 (October 26, 1888): 289.

Religious plays and moralities with valuable introductions form the body of Wheatley's third category, "Old English Drama." *The Chester Plays* were reedited from manuscripts by Hermann Deimling for EETS in 1893, and the *Digby Plays,* edited by Furnivall for the New Shakspere Society, were reissued by the EETS in 1896. The Towneley Plays were published in 1897, with a full introduction by A. W. Pollard, and the Coventry Corpus Christi Plays were edited by H. Craig and published in 1902. The noncycle Mystery Plays were edited and published by G. Waterhouse (1909) and the Macro Morality Plays, edited by Furnivall and A. W. Pollard, appeared in 1904.

The three morality plays, *Mankind* (ca. 1475), *Wisdom* (ca. 1460), and *The Castle of Perseverance* (ca. 1425), originally formed part of the collection of the Reverend Cox Macro. In 1882, when Furnivall was editing the *Digby Plays* for the New Shakspere Society, he obtained permission for a copy of the manuscript of the Macro Plays to be made by Eleanor Marx, the daughter of Karl Marx. Furnivall was well acquainted with Eleanor Marx, the "Miss Marx" to whom Elisabeth Murray refers but does not identify in *Caught in the Web of Words* in a discussion of Sir James Murray's dictionary expenses:

> . . . the inconsistent Furnivall would take it upon himself to employ additional readers for the Dictionary in the British Museum Library, and then expect James [Murray] to pay them. James was particularly indignant about a personal friend of Furnivall's, a Miss Marx, who claimed to have spent 110 hours collecting 144 words. The work should not have taken more than twelve hours and was of no use as all the words were from modern dictionaries and glossaries and none were new.[74]

Since this incident occurred around 1881–82, when the Macro manuscript was copied, the suspicion arises that Furnivall got Murray to pay her for time spent mainly on work for the New Shakspere Society. Yvonne Kapp writes that Eleanor Marx did "endless hackwork" for Furnivall: in 1877, "Eleanor took to going to the British Museum, where she worked for Dr. Furnivall in the interests of the Philological, the Chaucer and the Shakespeare Societies." Kapp also refers to Eleanor Marx's strong interest in the theater and quotes Mrs. Edward Compton (then Virginia Bateman) as saying that Eleanor was always

[74]Murray, *Caught in the Web of Words*, p. 212.

"most anxious to make me take Shakespeare seriously, indeed, she used to drag me to Furnivall's Shakespeare Society meetings."[75]

The Macro transcript was subsequently transferred to the EETS, and Furnivall allowed it to be used for editions of *Mankind* by J. M. Manly in volume 1 of *Specimens of the Pre-Shakespearean Drama* in 1897 and by Alois Brandl in *Quellen des weltlichen Dramas in England vor Shakespeare* in 1898. In a description of the manner in which the text was eventually edited for publication by the society, Pollard (coeditor with Furnivall) gives a glimpse of Furnivall pursuing his editors: "Dr. Furnivall began to fulfil his promise by editing the text and called on me to fulfil mine by writing this Introduction. Of course, as he always does when he means to have it, he got his own way."[76]

"Religious Treatises," Wheatley's fourth division, form a large percentage of the EETS output. *The Story of Genesis and Exodus* was edited by Richard Morris from a unique thirteenth-century manuscript, and in the "Homilies and Hymns" section of the "Religious Treatises" there is a vast amount of information about both the teaching of the church and the manners of the times. Furnivall's collection *Hymns to the Virgin and Christ, the Parliament of Devils and Other Religious Poems* (Lambeth manuscript 853) was published in 1867.[77] At the beginning of the Preface he writes:

> After telling Mrs. Gaskell one day a story for the truth of which I could not vouch, she said, with her beautiful bright smile, "Now I'm going to believe that, whether it's true or not. It ought to be true." On looking through the Lambeth MS. 853, which Mr. Stubbs kindly handed to me in Lambeth Palace Library, I could not help saying, "I'll print it all, whether it contains early versions or late; it *is* a jolly little Manuscript": a chubby vellum quarto, written in a large, clear, upright hand, which looked at first sight fourteenth century, but which the Museum authorities whom I afterwards consulted put at about

[75]Yvonne Kapp, *Eleanor Marx*, 1:172, 187.

[76]Frederick James Furnivall and A. W. Pollard, eds., *The Macro Plays*, p. x. Mark Eccles, the latest editor of *The Macro Plays*, concurs with Furnivall on several matters of interpretation; for example, see discussion of the dialect of the extant version of *The Castle of Perseverance*. Mark Eccles, ed., *The Macro Plays*, p. xi. With regard to the staging of the plays see p. xxi, where Eccles compares Furnivall's theories with those of R. Southern, *The Mediaeval Theatre in the Round*.

[77]*Gentleman's Magazine* 223 (1867): 212.

> 1430 A.D. As nice a little volume as one would wish to handle; a pleasing contrast to the shabby, scrubby, paper Percy folio of two hundred years later that I am now working at.[78]

Furnivall was not always welcome at the Lambeth Palace Library. When he wrote to make arrangements for Murray to see one of the Lyndsay manuscripts there in 1869, his letter was obviously tactless, for the librarian replied:

> Will you please not make remarks on the shortness the Library is open, to persons like Archdeacon Hale & others! . . . We give an hour more each day than the order in Council sanctioned. For all ordinary purposes except the E. E. Text Society it is sufficient!
>
> The stoves give good heat, so do not bring a great rug when you come.[79]

There are also service books and guides to devotion in this section, such as the *Earliest Prose Psalter,* the *Lay Folks' Catechism,* and *The Prymer, or Lay Folks' Prayer Book.* Other volumes include *Old English Martyrology* and Robert of Brunne's *"Handlyng Synne,"* edited by Furnivall, as well as his *Meditacyons on the Soper of our Lorde.* An edition of the *Cursor Mundi: Northumbrian Poem of the 14th Century in Four Versions,* was edited by Morris and issued in seven parts, the last of which came out in 1893.[80]

To the "Manners, including Old Surgery" category of EETS publications Furnivall was a principal contributor. That is not surprising, considering his obsessive Victorian interest in the value of historical study and the sociocultural implications of past ages. Furnivall's editorship normally resulted in prefaces to most EETS texts, each of which shows clearly the relationship of the work to its sociological background. Yet this special section of publications devoted to men and manners is an important one. The first in a series of fascinating books on the subject is Furnivall's *Early English Meals and Manners: The Booke of Nurture of John Russell, the Bokes of Keruynge, Curtasye, and Demeanor, the Babees Book, Urbanitatis, etc.* (1868), a treatment of Old World etiquette made even more instructive by

[78]Frederick James Furnivall, ed., *Hymns to the Virgin and Christ, the Parliament of Devils, and Other Religious Poems*, p. v.

[79]Murray, *Caught in the Web of Words*, pp. 95–96.

[80]*Early English Text Society Committee Report*, February, 1871, p. 9.

Furnivall's introduction, "Education in Early England."[81] The *Gentleman's Magazine* describes the text as the "full picture of the outer life of page and duke, of school-boy and girl, of older time, contained in the largest collection of verse treatises yet made on the Manners and Meals of our Ancestors . . . and having Forewords on Education in Early England before 1450 AD."[82]

Other significant texts in this category are Lucy Toulmin Smith's *English Gilds: Their Statutes and Customs,* two fifteenth-century cookery books, and a remarkable series of old books on surgery.[83] Smith's edition of *English Gilds,* published in 1870, had particular significance for the nineteenth century, as indicated by Lujo Brentano's appended essay, "Gilds and Trades-Unions."[84] The *Westminster Review* comments: "The Early English Text Society continues its great work which has already done more to illustrate the language, literature and life of our country than that performed by any other society. . . . *English Gilds* is a work of national importance."[85] The most important work for the Elizabethan period, according to the *Early English Text Society Committee Report* for January, 1869 (that is, for the "Extra Series"), was to be "Harrison's Description of England in 1577-87, . . . a formal description of the whole country, its men and their institutions, houses, manners, diet and dress; its animals; and the productions of its soil."[86]

[81]In a letter dated January 28, 1868, asking for his two-guinea copy of vol. 2 prt. 2 of Percy's *Humorous Lays*, Halliwell-Phillipps writes, "I am quite charmed & entranced by your Babees Book!" Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 352.

[82]*Gentleman's Magazine*, February, 1868, p. 212.

[83]Furnivall and his son, Percy, published an edition of *The Anatomie of the Bodie of Man*, by Thomas Vicary, in 1888. This was the edition of 1548 as reissued by the surgeons of St. Bartholomew's in 1577.

[84]Furnivall edited (for the EETS) *The Gild of St. Mary Lichfield.*

[85]*Early English Text Society Committee Report*, February, 1871, p. 2. Furnivall refers to this as "my pet book in the *series.*" *Chaucer Society Report*, March, 1877, p. 1.

[86]William Harrison [canon of Windsor], *Harrison's Description of England in Shakspere's Youth: Being the Second and Third Books of His "Description of Britain and England"* ed. F. J. Furnivall (3 vols.; London, 1877-1902), 2:x ff. Other books in this "English Manners" class include *Gesta Romanorum* (1879); the *Book of the Knight of La Tour Landry*, edited by Thomas Wright, revised with Forewords by Furnivall, and supplied with fresh notes, glossary, and index of phrases and proverbs by John Munro in 1906; *The Mediaeval Records of a London City Church (St. Mary-at-Hill* 1420-1559), edited by Henry Littlehales (1904); *The English Register of Godstow Nunnery* (1906), edited by Andrew Clark; and *The Coventry Leet Book*, edited by M. Dormer Harris (1908).

In his *Reminiscences,* William Rossetti describes the work he did for the EETS. Furnivall "bespoke" his services for the society's *Political, Religious, and Love Poems, from the Archbishop of Canterbury's Lambeth MS, No. 306 and Other Sources,* which was printed in 1866. One of the items in this series was *The Stacions of Rome,* a list of relics to be visited in various Roman churches. Furnivall asked for illustration and explanation of such relics; happily Rossetti found in one of his mother's books by Girolamo Francino (1600) a detailed account from which to complete his assignment.[87]

In his Preface to *The Stacions of Rome* (1867), Furnivall did not miss the opportunity to deliver a dig at religion, and an indignant EETS subscriber immediately wrote to *Notes and Queries:*

> Will you allow me to draw attention to the unpleasant tone of a preface by Mr. Furnivall to one of this year's publications? One passage to which exception might be taken runs as follows:
>
> "We should know of our forefathers what their religious belief and superstitious fancies were. Mary worship, Parliament of Devils, Stations of Rome, St. Gregory's Trental and what not; let us have them all: all the nonsense . . . ."
>
> What is to be thought of one who masses together, as if they were all of a piece, the diverse items enumerated in this extract? . . . Is Mr. Furnivall unaware that there are still people in England who do not consider all these different items to be *nonsense?* Or does he wish to deter all such persons from subscribing to the Early English Text Society and from purchasing their books?[88]

In the next issue Skeat regrets "an indiscreet phrase in a preface" and defends the accuracy and value of the society's publications.[89]

Furnivall's insatiable curiosity about the distant past led him to unearth ancient family wills at Somerset House, and in 1882 he edited and published *The Fifty Earliest English Wills in the Court of*

[87]When Furnivall edited *Queene Elizabethes Achademy* in 1869, Rossetti was co-author of an essay on its second part, *Accounts of Early Italian, German, and French Books, on Courtesy, Manners and Cookery.* He was also asked by Furnivall to translate a verse treatise by Fra Bonvicino da Riva, *De le Zinquanta Contexie da Tavola* (ca.1290), which was published as a seventy-six-page essay entitled *Italian Courtesy-books: Fra Bonvicino da Riva's Fifty Courtesies for the Table (Italian and English), with Other Translations and Elucidations.* William Michael Rossetti, *Some Reminiscences of William Michael Rossetti,* 2: 398–99.

[88]*Notes and Queries,* 3d ser. 11 (March 23, 1867): 232.

[89]*Notes and Queries,* 3d ser. 11 (March 30, 1867): 264.

*Probate.* The edition opens with Furnivall's criticism of the facilities at Somerset House in a dedication to "J. Challenor Smith, Esq., Superintendent of the Department for Literary Enquiry, in the Registry of the Court of Probate, Somerset House, London":

> The Manuscript room at the British Museum is bad enough; but your Enquiry room is far worse. If only Sir James had the old power of torture, and could apply thumbscrews or racks to all the Lords of the Treasury—I'd let the First Lord off, tho—he would soon set matters to rights, and give you a room worthy of your Department and his Court.[90]

He goes on to point out in his "Forewords" (Furnivall preferred this Anglo-Saxon word to the Latinate "Preface") the immense historical and sociological value of wills:

> Both for the Life and Language of our old-time folk, their Wills have always been acknowledged as most worthful. They let you into the state of every home. They uze words not found in books. Since our Society first started, I always hoped that some one would copy and edit us a volume of Wills; but as no one offered, and as I got a chance of transcribing one in the spring of 1881, . . . I took it, in order to hav a volume wherewith a gap in the Society's issues could be fild up when need should be. The need came this autumn, and here the little Text is . . . .
>
> . . . In Persons, it ranges from the Countess of Warwick, the Kingmaker's mother-in-law, to a Waxchandler's servant and many a poorer man. In Property, it stretches from the entail of large landed estates on sons, to a portion of one bullock for a daughter (98/11, 12), or to the gift of one sheet, or a towel-roller, an egg-gridiron or an old brass pot (102/5, 6), to a legatee.
>
> Of two things, more appears in the Wills than I had expected, namely, silver plate, and furd gowns; for the latter, polecats, martins, genets, wild cats, beaver, otter, and lamb, were prest into the service. Of Armour there is less than I'd lookt for.
>
> But the most surprizing and regrettable thing in these Wills is the amount of money shown to hav been wasted in vain prayers, or orders for them. Fancy one man ordering a Million Masses to be said for his soul; another 10,000; another 4,400; another sending Pilgrims to Spain, Rome, Jerusalem, &c. for the good of his soul! I only hope some sensible Executors handed over the money to the Testators' wives and children, or the poor.[91]

[90]Frederick James Furnivall, ed., *The Fifty Earliest English Wills in the Court of Probate*, pp. viii–x.

[91]Ibid., p. xi.

Furnivall brings his "Forewords" to an end with the following acknowledgment:

> To my friend Miss Teena Rochfort-Smith, I am also indebted for the List of Words and Places in the first 8 pages of the book, and for soothing my soul when, on certain evenings, I was grinding at the rest of that wearing work, by singing me all my old favourite mezzo-soprano songs. . . . May all opprest Indexers hav the like sweet consolement!
>
> British Museum, (5 p.m., under the Electric light), Dec. 5, 1882.[92]

In the sixth category, "Dictionaries and Grammatical Tracts," the most important work was the monumental *On Early English Pronunciation,* by Alexander J. Ellis, president of the Philological Society and one of the chief advocates of phonetic spelling and orthographic reform. The work was completed in 1889, when part 5 ("The Present English Dialects") was published.[93] For the first time in the history of the English language Ellis, acting on information he had found in William Salesbury's *Welsh and English Dictionary* (1547), surveys the pronunciation of English as a whole. Ellis's labors almost ruined his health; after the completion of part 3 in 1871 he had to take a long rest from phonetic work. In view of the scope of the work (considered at the time to form the foundation of English phonology), the breakdown in health is not surprising.[94]

The foregoing account of the EETS publications that were of the greatest intrinsic and scholarly value should not, of course, detract from the importance of the vast body of poetry, philosophy, romances,

[92]Ibid., pp. xv–xvi. See *Bibliographical Society Transactions* 7 (1904): 99.

[93]A proposed dictionary series that grew out of H. B. Wheatley's list of English dictionaries for the Philological Society in 1865 included Richard Huloet's *Abcedarium Anglo-Latinum* (1552), John Withals's *A Little Dictionary for Children* (1556), and Peter Levins's *Manipulus Vocabulorum* (1570). Not all of the proposed texts were worked on, however; for example, it was decided that Huloet was too extensive to be undertaken by the society, and the printing of some grammatical tracts was postponed.

[94]"The mass of detail and the wealth of illustration contained in the first three volumes are staggering; for example, part 3 contained "Illustrations of the Pronunciation of English during the XIVth and XVIth centuries, and of the Pronunciation of Welsh and French, and English pronunciation of Latin in the XVIth century. CHAUCER (specimen, with introduction and new critical text of Prologue), GOWER (specimen, with text printed for the first time from three MSS), WYCLIFFE (specimen), SPENSER (specimens as pronunced by GILL with an examination of SPENSER'S, SIDNEY'S, TENNYSON'S and MOORE'S *Rhymes*), SHAKSPERE (specimen, with an examination of his *Puns* and *Rhymes*)." *Early English Text Society Annual Report,* February, 1871, p. 11.

saints' lives, books of manners, homilies, scriptural paraphrases, moral and devotional works, and miscellaneous treatises not referred to here but all found, for example, in the *List of Publications of the Early English Text Society,* published in 1931 and 1936.[95] While the works discussed above represent only a fraction of the society's total output during the period, they give some indication of the new character that English studies had assumed. No doubt the Philological Society was a landmark in the history of language study in England, yet the EETS, as a formal scholarly organization making available for the literary world valuable texts properly edited and generously glossed, marks an entirely new and immensely meaningful stage in the history of English scholarship in general, as well as in the history of philology. Despite financial and administrative problems, Furnivall's original plan, "to bring the mass of unprinted Early English literature within the reach of the ordinary student for study, research and reference," was assured of success.[96]

An important scheme set up by the EETS was an annual competition in Early English literature at universities and colleges for the society's prizes of two years' issues of its texts. The winners and examiners of this competition, in which Furnivall obviously had a hand, were regularly reported in the society's annual reports; for example, Joseph Bosworth examined at Oxford, David Masson, at Edinburgh, and Henry Morley, at University College, London. The society's report for January, 1867, commenting on the success of these examinations, says that the EETS committee members are confident that the general excitement about early literature which the society has created in many "centres of intellectual life" will have excellent results, especially because of the publication of Richard Morris's *Early English Extracts,* which for the first time provides students with a reliable textbook as a guide. The members also express their gratitude to the professors who answered the society's call and provided extra lectures and extra examinations for the purpose of selecting prizewinners.[97] Later, in 1873, it was reported

[95]See also Skeat, ed., *The Bruce*, p. 8.

[96]For further discussion of this point, see Harold Williams, *Book Clubs and Printing Societies of Great Britain and Ireland*, p. 74.

[97]*Early English Text Society Report*, January, 1867, p. 2.

that the prizes continued "to do the good work they were intended for. They stimulate study of our Early Literature, and have often induced young men at College, and boys at School, who have not cared to try for distinction in other branches of study, to attain it in this."[98] Thus year after year professors of colleges and masters of schools continued to oblige the EETS by "furthering its efforts to increase the sound historical knowledge of English," and many were able to report very favorably on their students' progress in Early English studies. In 1871, "Mr. Furnivall was so pleased with the Piers-Plowman answers of the first two boys of the Manchester Grammar School class, that he sent the second boy, Chambers, an extra Book."[99]

The progress of the society during its first six years of operation is shown in the following membership, financial, and production table (which does not include reprints), published by the society in 1871.

EETS Progress Report

| | 1864 | 1865 | 1866 | 1867 | 1868 | 1869 | 1870 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Original Series | | | | | | |
| Members | 145 | 260 | 409 | 580 | 660 | 635 | 590 |
| Income, pounds | 152 | 384 | 581 | 717 | 761 | 645 | 796 |
| Pages issued | 481 | 950 | 2,034 | 1,207 | 1,363 | 1,438 | 971 |
| | Extra Series | | | | | | |
| Members | ... | ... | ... | 150 | 250 | 255 | 240 |
| Income, pounds | ... | ... | ... | 161 | 300 | 345 | 504 |
| Pages issued | ... | ... | ... | 804 | 584 | 682 | 664 |

[98]*Early English Text Society Report*, January, 1873, p. 12. During this year the competition was extended abroad: prize books were sent to Nikolaus Delius at Bonn University; Ludwig Herrig, at his Academy for Modern Philology, in Berlin; Francis Andrew March, Lafayette College, Philadelphia; and Patwin, Western Reserve College, Hudson, Ohio.

[99]*Early English Text Society Report*, February, 1871, p. 17. The committee "had great pleasure in adding to the list of Prize-receivers the University of Marburg, in Cassel, for the class taught by Professor Bernhard ten Brink, the author of the learned and ingenious *Studien* on Chaucer, that have been translated for publishing by the Chaucer Society." Ibid.

The columns must be read with two points in mind: in some years the society had to spend much of its income on copying and preparing texts for future years, while in other years nearly all income went to printing, and in 1870 more than £230 was spent on copiers and expenses that did not show in the number of "pages issued" for that year. During 1866 all the texts published in 1864 and 1865 went out of print, and the printers' orders for future issues were increased from 500 to 750 copies, then from 750 to 1,000 copies.

It was Furnivall's sound judgment and instinct that led him in the first place to lay chief emphasis upon the literal reproduction of manuscripts. He became acquainted with the material and its location and quickly set about collating proofs of it. His workers were expected to apply themselves with the same diligence and speed. On one occasion Thomas Wright volunteered to edit the text of *The Book of the Knight of La Tour-Landry* and to read the proofs with the originals. Under cross examination by Furnivall, however, Wright admitted that when he found that the first proof sheet tallied with the manuscript he decided that no further check was necessary.[100] Furnivall was always very impatient with such carelessness. Alois Brandl writes: "How angry he could be and what bolts he would hurl in his Fore-words at the luckless editor who chanced to base his text on an inferior manuscript."[101] Yet despite Furnivall's anger at the mistakes of his editors, his own work was not at all times flawless or meticulous, and at least some of his helpers' shortcomings can be traced to his occasionally unsatisfactory editorial methods and supervision. Of course, the virtual absence of English studies from the older universities meant that it was difficult to acquire editors adequately trained in textual criticism, and Furnivall was frequently forced to use novices who, for example, might have little or no knowledge of medieval England and no experience in handling a text that existed in several manuscripts. Yet Furnivall merely aggravated the situation by his tendency at times to rush texts through the hands of amateurs and into print to gain quick results. For example, he sometimes had a clerk make a transcript of the most readily available (not necessarily the best) copy of a text; he then printed it and handed the proofs to other

[100]Thomas Wright, ed. *The Book of the Knight of La Tour-Landry*, rev. ed., p. v.

[101]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. 12.

clerks—or scholars, if that was possible—to collate with other copies of the work, and then finished the editing himself while he was correcting the proofs.

This rapid, impatient way of working frequently upset his more painstaking and usually more scholarly editors, whose slowness of pace Furnivall was, of course, always grumbling about. Describing the time when he asked Murray to edit a collection of miscellaneous Scottish poems from manuscripts in the British Museum and an edition of Blind Harry's *Wallace,* Elisabeth Murray writes:

> Letters from Furnivall flowed in at the rate of several a week, sometimes two a day, all expecting James to respond with an energy equal to his own. They read breathlessly, as though Furnivall were catching a train rather than engaged on literary research. . . .
>
> When James went to Edinburgh to check his text in the Advocates Library, Furnivall was ready at once with suggestions of other work to be done. He offered to pay James' expenses if he would devote ten days of his holiday to correcting a printed text of the Arthurian *Romances* by a manuscript there. He suggested that he should also see the Lyndsay manuscript and if he could do any more in the time, he could check the *Sir Tristram* and *Bevis of Hampton.* Furnivall ended one letter of instructions with a plea "If you could copy on bigger paper, & write bigger, the printer would like it much better. Write as fast as you like, only *big,* so that it doesn't strain the men's eyes. Childs says I've nearly blinded one man."[102]

One reason why inaccuracies sometimes crept into Furnivall's own editions was that he often had his eye on the content, or the 'story,' as he called it, of the work rather than on its purely textual and editorial aspects. Furnivall once said to his friend Henry Bradshaw, "—— cares for language, —— for metre, I for neither, only story and social life and opinion; your [sic] for all, and that's best."[103] On December 18, 1866, he wrote to Bradshaw: "If one doesn't know all that you know, you seem to take it as a personal insult. I never saw such a fellow. Of course it makes me like you all the better, after the first minute, but during that period one feels inclined to shove you."[104]

[102]Murray, *Caught in the Web of Words*, p. 93.

[103]G. W. Prothero, *Memoir of Henry Bradshaw*, p. 216.

[104]Cambridge University Library, Bradshaw Papers.

Naturally, Furnivall's mistakes were not confined to EETS publications. He missed the best manuscript when he put out the *Handlyng Synne* of Robert de Brunne with the *Manuel des Pechiez* of William of Waddington for the Roxburghe Club in 1862. When Henry Bradley anonymously reviewed the edition of *Robert of Brunne* in 1888, Furnivall wrote to him, "I have been getting a fine dressing down about my Robert; the worst of it is I have nothing to say for myself, the man seems to be right all through. I wonder who it is that writes these things. Is it you?"[105] The long time that Furnivall took to finish this edition for the Rolls Series also shows that he was as capable of delay as any other editor. He had started work on the *Chronicle* in 1860 and by 1876 had still not completed it. In 1877, T. D. Hardy, deputy keeper of the records of the Public Records Office, reminded Furnivall of "the promises you have made on the [six following] dates (which you have not fulfilled)."[106] Nine years later, in 1886, Maxwell Lyte, Hardy's successor, threatened to publish the *Chronicle* without an introduction if one did not materialize by August 2. Furnivall replied:

> All that you say of my failure to turn out Robert de Brunne's Chronicle is, alas, too true, but there is no hope whatever of my being able to complete the introduction by August 2. Just now I am good for nothing but a scull on the river, or a ride on a bicycle and marking a Shakespeare quarto. But I'll take R. B. with me to a quiet village on the Yorkshire moors on July 20. . . . If by September 2 you can get nothing from me, then the book can go out as it is.[107]

Angered by this rather offhand reply, Lyte told Furnivall that the work "undertaken by you for Her Majesty's Government many years ago should have precedence of all other literary studies, however interesting and attractive."[108] On September 2, Furnivall wrote:

> I took all my books to Yorkshire, but never opened them. Lawn tennis, cricket, walks, picnics, getting up a Concert and Dances occupied all the holiday. Then

[105]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. 6. In 1901 the EETS published part 1 of Frederick James Furnivall, ed., *Robert of Brunne's "Handlyng Synne," A.D. 1303, with Those Parts of the Anglo-French Treatise on Which It Was Founded, William of Waddington's "Manuel des Pechiez," Re-edited from MSS in the British Museum and Bodleian Libraries.* Part 2 appeared in 1903.

[106]David Knowles, *Great Historical Enterprises*, p. 124.

[107]Ibid.

[108]Ibid., pp. 124–25.

> since my return there's been the practice for our Sculling Fours race next Saturday, the arrangements for getting a Sculling Eight next season, etc. . . . If you're an old rowing man, you should come and have a paddle in one of our Sculling Fours.[109]

Two weeks later another letter came from Furnivall: "A disaster has befallen me. I've lost my working copy of Robert of Brunne with my half-written Introduction and Mr. Sweet's notes. It's an awful blow." All was not lost, however. Furnivall added: ". . . there was one consolation. Yesterday I was told of a Clasper Eight, a £60 used only one season, to be sold for £16, out of which we can probably make a second racing Sculling Eight."[110] In exasperated fury, Lyte threatened to question Furnivall's civil pension in the light of his neglect of duty. On Boxing Day, 1886, Furnivall promised to produce the work, but added a P.S.: "Had a glorious scull in a wager boat on Xmas morning. River beautiful."[111] Finally, on June 22, 1887, the completed introduction arrived, with a note enclosed:

> I send this at last. I have been in the country and learning to swim and sculling.
>
> Yours very truly,
>
> F.J.F.[112]

Correspondence for the EETS and other societies varies as much in tone as in subject matter. On January 23, 1886, an upset Skeat wrote to Furnivall from Cambridge:

> You've made a most fearful blunder somehow with the P.Pl. bits. It beats me. The piece you give me from MS 10,574 (Whitaker's) is *not* in Whitaker!!—and your account of the types is consequently all wrong. Whitaker never mentions either *mayors* or macero. I enclose what he *does* say that you may see for yourself.[113]

In the following letter to W. Carew Hazlitt on October 14, 1868, Furnivall reprimands Hazlitt in very different terms from those of his own rebuke by Skeat:

[109]Ibid., p. 125.

[110]Ibid.

[111]Ibid., p. 126.

[112]Ibid.

[113]King's College Library, Furnivall Papers.

> I *do* feel inclined occasionally to swear at you, and write to N & Q about you. Here in Vox Pop. where you've just reprinted Dyce, without his collations, and *leaving out 1 line only,* you say "Occasionally, however, he [Hazlitt] has been obliged to exclude the additional matter, which was sometimes interwoven, of course by a latter hand, without much regard to the sense or the context." Now if this isn't gammon-prigging Dyce's text, and then patronising him,—I don't know what is. You ought to have a shaking.[114]

Furnivall was eager to have his and other workers' correspondence preserved for posterity; he naturally regarded such material as a legacy to future ages. On June 20, 1870, he wrote to the British Museum: "Do you keep a private cupboard where letters by men of more or less note can be locked up till their deaths, & then mounted? . . . You might get an interesting Victorian collection together for after-times."[115] At that time Furnivall presented sixty-eight letters to the British Museum, and six more on June 22 and 24 and July 11.[116]

Work for the EETS from 1864 to the present day has been carried on by the most distinguished of scholars, including Richard Morris, Henry B. Wheatley, Walter Skeat, James A. H. Murray, Julius Zupitza, Henry Sweet, Arthur S. Napier, Israel Gollancz, Raymond W. Chambers, Herbert George Wright, John R. R. Tolkien, Norman Davis, and Norman Blake. A measure of what the society had already achieved for English language and literature by the time Furnivall died is seen in its financial statement for 1911, which shows that the cost of publications was over thirty thousand pounds. In the same year the society announced that if its current rate of production was maintained it had in the planning stage material sufficient for fifty years more and that if it undertook all the work it felt it ought to do there was material for one or two centuries, not counting texts already on its lists for publication.

The activities of the EETS gave new life to the study of Early English in Germany, as well as in England. In the society's report for September, 1879, Zupitza, editor of *The Romance of Guy of Warwick* (1875, 1883) for the society, speaks of the great increase in

[114]British Library, MS 38900 fols. 158–59, October 14, 1868.

[115]British Library, Add. MS 43798, fol. 1.

[116]Ibid., fols. 1–68; British Library Add. MS 34813, fols. 24–29.

[117]*Early English Text Society Annual Report*, September, 1879.

the scientific study of English that had taken place in Germany,[117] and Richard Wülker notes that through its publications the EETS had given "not only an impulse to more advanced work in Germany, and indeed made it possible, but also an opportunity to German scholars of publishing editions among the volumes of the Society."[118]

When the first volume of Jacob Grimm's *Deutsche Grammatik* came out in 1819, Grimm blamed the incompleteness of his handling of "Mittelenglisch," as he called it, to "want of space and insufficient study." It would have been truer to say that what he needed were reliable editions of manuscripts; for example, Thomas Tyrwhitt's text of Chaucer, though readable, lacked the accuracy and uniformity essential for the founding of a system of phonetics. Edward Fiedler's first *German Historical Grammar of the English Language,* published in 1853, suffered in the same way. Yet although Frederich Koch had to work from his predecessors' sources when he began his *Historische Grammatik der englischen Sprache,* the first volume of which was published in 1861, by 1865, when the second volume appeared, the publication of *Morte Arthure, Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight,* and Early English poems like *Genesis, Exodus,* and *Lancelot* had made his sources very much richer by providing, for example, hitherto unobtainable information about the peculiarities of the Northern and Scottish dialects. Even more material had become available, of course, by 1869, when the third volume was published.[119]

The influence of the EETS editions is also seen in the German grammars of Friedrich Kluge and Lorenz Morsbach at the end of the century. [120] The same is true of the German readers. Those published in Germany after 1864, containing specimens of the Middle English

[118]*An English Miscellany*, p. 477. See *English Association Bulletin*, no. 6 (November, 1908), pp. 9–10. Recognition of the importance of the EETS in Germany is found in F. Pfeiffer's *Germania* 8:117, in which A. Schulz commends the industry of Furnivall (See "Zür mittelalterlichen Literatur Englands"), and in later numbers which list the latest EETS publications. Adolf Ebert's *Jahrbuch für romanische und englische Literatur* 8 (1868) lists EETS publications for 1865 (Zür englischen Literaturgeschichte"), pp. 462ff.

[119]See *An English Miscellany*, pp. 474–75. After Koch's death in 1872 the "Hand exemplar" of the first part, which contained most of the new material, vanished, but Koch often admitted that he was greatly indebted to the founder and editors of the EETS. See his review of Francis H. Stratmann's *Dictionary of the Old English Language* in *Zeitschrift* (Halle, 1869), 1:364.

[120]See, for instance, Lorenz Morsbach, *Mittelenglische Grammatik.*

period, are almost exclusively based on EETS publications; in fact, it was the society that made their publication possible. In the "Dictionaries" section, Richard Wülker records an interesting instance in which a lexicographer had to modernize his dictionary in light of the latest EETS productions. The first sections of Franz Heinrich Stratmann's *A Dictionary of the English Language of the XIII, XIV, and XV Centuries* appeared in 1864, and the completed work was published in 1867. Since, however, the EETS was publishing new volumes each year that related to the period covered by Stratmann, A.D. 1200-1400, he was forced to bring out a new edition in 1871. Almost all the new information and additions that it contained were taken from EETS publications.[121] On the other hand, Eduard Mätzner's *Altenglische Sprachproben nebst einem Wörterbuche* (1867-1900) drew its examples from the society's editions from the start and thus can claim to be the unique dictionary of the entire collection.[122]

The Early English Text Society created a modern knowledge of medieval literature and signaled the start of a remarkable revival in literary-society activity. Furnivall's own staggering contribution to the society's output was thirty-nine volumes, ranging from the *Chester Depositions* to the *English Conquest of Ireland.* Beatrice White, who edited three volumes for the EETS, marvels at the labors and pains that Furnivall must have endured preparing thirty-nine and adds:

> We ought never to forget that it was through his E.E.T.S. that Furnivall, exploiting the wealth of our ancient literature from sources untapped before, established by means of it a lasting comity of scholars united by the same aim—the search for truth through the strait way of literary and linguistic research.[123]

[121]*An English Miscellany*, p. 476. See also *Gentleman's Magazine*, February, 1868, p. 211.

[122]Moreover, invaluable books like Jakob Schipper's extensive treatment of the meters of the older periods in his *Englische Metrik in historischer und systematischer Entwicklung dargestellt* and Bernhard ten Brink's *Geschichte der englischen Literatur* (1877-93) could never have been written were it not for the tireless labors of Furnivall and his editors. See Bernhard ten Brink, *Early English Literature*, Vol. 1 of *History of English Literature* (3 vols.), trans. Horace Kennedy. The first volume (published in Berlin in 1877) brings the history of English literature down to *Piers the Plowman.*

[123]Beatrice White, *Essays and Studies*, 1952, p. 71.

When set beside the Early English Text Society, Furnivall's other societies pale in significance. Each of the later Victorian literary societies, however, made its own particular contribution to English studies, and what the societies may have sometimes lacked in literary importance they often made up for in the colorful activities of their founder.

### *The Ballad Society* (1868) and *The Chaucer Society* (1868)

If the EETS was a striking example of the successful nineteenth-century text society, the Ballad Society, which Furnivall founded in 1868, was an equally striking example of the failure of an ambitious project that was not established upon a genuinely collaborative or cooperative basis. The society was begun by Furnivall on the completion of the printing of the Percy Folio in the spring of 1868. Its purpose was to make available the rare but extensive stores of ballads in the public and, where possible, private collections throughout the country. In one of his customary "Forewords" (in this case to *Bishop Percy's Folio Manuscript*), Furnivall writes:

> As we have made a fair start at Ballads with this Percy book, it seems a pity to stop till we have reprinted the whole of the rest of the collection. I have therefore made arrangements for a *Ballad Society,* which will begin to publish next year and work steadily through the whole of our Ballad collections.[124]

Evidence of interest in the Percy ballads is found in the large number of subscribers' letters to Furnivall on the subject. On January 8, 1868, George H. White wrote: "I have bagged an additional subscriber to the Percy Ballads and enclose a cheque for £1.1. The work may be sent to me." On December 23, 1867, J. Rawson Lumby wrote: "I have just been on a visit to Anthony Trollope and I got him as a subscriber to the Percy publication. . . . [He] will also become a subscriber to the Text Society from next January."[125]

Although Furnivall traveled to various libraries to inspect and copy manuscripts, some of the manuscripts were lent to him and to other scholars. The practice of borrowing and lending manuscripts was

[124]Frederick James Furnivall and J. W. Hales, eds., *Bishop Percy's Folio MS Ballads and Romances*, 1:xxv–xxvi.

[125]These and other such letters are in King's College Library, Furnivall Papers.

common during the nineteenth century. In *Caught in the Web of Words,* Elisabeth Murray describes how James Murray's work for the EETS included "collecting, standing surety and returning . . . priceless volumes."[126] In a letter dated November 29, 1866, Furnivall invited William Carew Hazlitt to his home at Primrose Hill to have a look at the Percy manuscript on which he was working. Presumably this precious folio, borrowed from descendants of Bishop Percy, lay among the dust sheets with the dictionary materials and other mounds of print while it was in Furnivall's possession.

In addition to the huge ballad collections in various libraries in the British Isles, Furnivall also had his eye on the rarest and largest collection, the Pepys Collection at Magdalene College, Cambridge. Immediately after the society was founded he proposed—or rather demanded—that the fellows of Magdalene team with the Ballad Society to publish their valuable collection. The proposal was turned down. Furnivall may not have been surprised at this. His doubts about the availability of the Pepys Collection can be noted in the following announcement: "The Society will begin with the Pepys Collection, unless the Fellows of Magdalene decide on reprinting it themselves, as they have for some time thought of doing."[127] Later, in 1897, the Reverend Joseph Woodfall Ebsworth, a Ballad Society editor, expressed his views on the subject: "The legal and scholastic authorities of Magdalene College were entitled to withhold such a privilege, that seemed to be extorted arrogantly by a brand-new, self-assertive 'society' not yet famous for work; not requested as a favour submissively."[128]

Furnivall turned to another important set of ballads, the Roxburghe Collection in the British Museum, which he described as "the oldest and best known of its kind." He also included in the future work of the society the "Bagford Collections in the British Museum, the Ashmole, Rawlinson and Douce in the Bodleian, Mr. Ewing's Collection (if he will allow it), and such MS Ballads as can be found,—as they stand,

[126]Murray, *Caught in the Web of Words*, p. 98. Also, on August 31, 1893, A. L. Mayhew writes to Furnivall about the possibility that a Winchester manuscript will be recalled before he has finished work on it. Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 606.

[127]Furnivall and Hales, eds., *Bishop Percy Folio MS*, p. xxvi.

[128]J. W. Ebsworth, ed., *The Roxburghe Ballads*, 8:739.

without selection or castration."[129] Furnivall concluded his "prospectus" in characteristic fashion with the challenge, "Who will be the first to get his share done?"

The Roxburghe ballads were to be edited by William Chappell, "the author best known in connexion with English Ballads, their times and history."[130] But Chappell insisted that, before publication was begun, a copy must be made of the whole of the three large folio volumes of the Roxburghe Collection and that careful indexes of all the other large collections must be prepared. To keep things moving in the meantime, Furnivall got the society's publications under way himself with his series of classified *Ballads from Manuscripts,* the first volume of which came out in 1868.[131] In the Foreword to volume 1, *Ballads on the Condition of England in Henry VIII's and Edward VI's Reigns, on Wolsey, Anne Boleyn, Somerset, and Lady Jane Grey . . . ,* Furnivall describes the value of ballads in allowing people to see "what the condition of England in past times was" and claims that J. A. Froude's account of England in Henry VIII's "early time" gives a wrong picture:

> The truth is, that Henry VIII's reign, instead of being a specially bright time for working-men, was a dark one. . . . The wide conversion of tillage into pasture—sheep devouring men, as Sir Thomas More said—the decay of villages . . . .Open what book, hear what ballad, of the time, you will, "a careful cry" comes forth.[132]

In the same Foreword he arrogantly dismisses critics who have quite properly attacked his usual long, overwritten introductions and commentaries in volume 1, part 1 of *Ballads from Manuscripts* when they first appeared in 1868. "To those critics who have objected to the length of my Introductions to *Now a Dayes,* etc., I have only to say

[129]Furnivall and Hales, eds., *Bishop Percy Folio MS*, p. xxv.

[130]Ebsworth, ed., *The Roxburghe Ballads*, title page.

[131]A reviewer of *Ballads from Manuscripts* in the *Spectator*, May, 1873, p. 643, calls the ballads "trashy rigmaroles," and although he commends Furnivall's editorial perseverance, he laments Furnivall's "unprovoked quotation of Chaucer's worst ribaldry." The review states that Furnivall has entered "into the old sins of the monks and clergy . . . to an extent that we care not to examine" and claims that Furnivall's preface makes a direct attack on Froude and his Utopian view of early England.

[132]Frederick James Furnivall, ed., *Ballads from Manuscripts* (London, 1868-72), 1:vi.

that I believe I understand my own business better than they do."[133] Yet the review of this volume in *Notes & Queries,* for instance, is balanced and fair and with good reason seizes upon a commentary that runs to twelve times the length of the text. After warning of the dangers of printing in a ballad collection poems that properly belong in EETS publications, the critic advises:

> Not to overload the ballads with such a mass of illustration and dissertation, as is here hung on to the ballad "Nowe a dayes"—the ballad occupies eight pages, the comment nearly a hundred. Surely this is reversing the conditions of Falstaff's feast, and giving us an intolerable quantity of bread "to one poor halfpenny worth of sack."[134]

Elsewhere Furnivall is attacked for this diffuse Victorian bric-a-brac, which Stephen Potter would no doubt attribute to his pseudoscientific and precious editorial mind.[135] More recently Kathleen Tillotson has decried Furnivall's "vast sprawling introductions," describing them as containing "odds and ends of scholarship, muscular Christianity, romantic feminism, and references to social evils" and feeling obliged to "abridge drastically his torrential and discursive pages."[136]

The first number of Chappell's *Roxburghe Ballads* was published in 1870, and the society's work proceeded satisfactorily. Furnivall's edition of *Captain Cox's Ballads* appeared in 1871, his *Love Poems and Humorous Ones* in 1874, and Ebsworth's *Bagford Ballads* in 1877 and 1878. Problems arose, however, when because of ill health (and old age, according to Ebsworth) Chappell had to stop work after completing the third volume of the *Roxburghe Ballads* and Ebsworth became sole editor of all the remaining publications of the society. After the *Bagford Ballads* were completed in 1880, the six remaining volumes of the *Roxburghe Ballads* used up all of the society's time and money. The twenty-fifth and final part of the *Roxburghe Ballads,* the last of the Ballad Society's issues, came out in 1899, exactly thirty years after publication of the Roxburghe Collection began.

[133]Ibid., p. ix.

[134]*Notes and Queries* 3 (March, 1869): 255.

[135]See Stephen Potter, *The Muse in Chains*, pp. 175ff.

[136]The reference is to Furnivall's Roxburghe Club editions of Lovelich and the French *Queste*. G. Tillotson and K. Tillotson, *Mid-Victorian Studies*, p. 97. See *Athenaeum*, October, 1867, p. 533, for more criticism of Furnivall's Forewords.

General indexes to the collection prepared by Ebsworth could not be published for lack of subscriptions. An edition of Civil War ballads was announced but never produced.[137]

In a rhymed synopsis of the society's publications, "The Ballad Society's Ten Little Volumes," Ebsworth refers to the demise of the indexes:

> Now at last, in '97 every song's in type,
> Nought but INDICES to print ("copy" for them ripe):
> Ballads'—own *Society* you from the slate may wipe;
> Members should pay up arrears, to loose the final gripe.[138]

The eventual failure of the Ballad Society, with such a huge body of material still to be edited and published, must have come as a great disappointment to Furnivall. The finger of blame for the collapse of the venture can be pointed in several directions. From the start Furnivall was founder and nominal head of the society, but after 1875, Ebsworth was really the responsible head, or "director," and had to do all the editorial work on his own, a point he was fond of making to his friends and, when he got the chance, to the public. He writes, "How much has been achieved single-handedly since 1879, by eighteen years of labour and decreasing income . . . let his vols. iv, v, vi, vii, and viii be cited in proof."[139]

Ebsworth also charges the society, or rather its founder, with poor financial management and weak administrative methods. In 1868 there were almost two hundred members and an annual subscription list of £213.3, but, according to Ebsworth, the income "was frittered away in premature payments to incompetent copyists of texts that would not be needed for a score of years, . . . some never to be actually used at all," and "the most wasteful extravagance of space was persisted in." Then "the woeful blunder of reducing to half-price the first nine years' issue damaged the commercial value."[140]

By 1880 the membership had fallen to about 130, and by 1897 to less than 100. All of this certainly supports the charge of mismanage-

[137]Ebsworth, ed., *The Roxburghe Ballads*, vol. 8, pt. 3, p. ix.

[138]Ibid., p. 878.

[139]Ibid., p. ix.

[140]Ibid.

ment, but it also points to poor editorial policy—and that was Ebsworth's responsibility. In light of the criticism from the *Notes & Queries* editor about bulky critical apparatus in the early volumes of the society, Ebsworth might have been expected to be scrupulously explicit and concise in his editorial comments and notes. Instead, he proceeded to pack his volumes with what Steeves describes as "useless and facetious (and latterly misogynistical) comment, fragmentary quotations, editorial confidences, doggerel of his own, and a thousand needless editorial obstructions of all kinds."[141] The truth was that Ebsworth was unsuitable as either the director or editor of the society.

Compared with the achievements of the EETS and the Chaucer Society, the Ballad Society's work was distinctly inferior and certainly helped to fulfill *Notes & Queries'* prophecy that "without careful scrutiny, the Ballad Society may assuredly suffer shipwreck."[142] Nevertheless, the society's *Roxburghe Ballads* and *Bagford Ballads* have proved over the years to be of inestimable benefit to many a historical and literary student.

Since the Chaucer Society was established in the same year (1868) as the Ballad Society, critics of Furnivall like Gilbert Murray claim that his neglect of Ballad Society affairs demonstrates his tendency to rush impetuously into a scheme and then abandon it when something more enticing is in the offing. Furnivall's obsession with Chaucer strengthens this supposition. What is perhaps more important than his capriciousness in this case however, is that he was to do far more valuable work for Chaucerian studies than he was likely to have done for English balladry.

The Chaucer Society was established by Furnivall "to do honour to Chaucer, and to let lovers and students of him see how far the best unprinted manuscripts of his works differed from the printed texts." Furnivall writes in his prospectus:

> There are many questions of metre, pronunciation, orthography and etymology, yet to be settled, for which more prints of Manuscripts are wanted. . . . The founder's proposal is to begin with *The Canterbury Tales*, and give of them (in parallel columns in Royal 4 to) six of the best unprinted Manuscripts known.

[141]Steeves, *Learned Societies*, p. 168.

[142]*Notes and Queries* 3 (March, 1869): 255.

> . . . The first six MSS to be printed are the Ellesmere (by leave of the Earl of Ellesmere); the Hengwrt (by leave of W. W. E. Wynne, Esq.); the Cambridge University Libr. MS. Gg. 4.27; the Corpus, Oxford; the Petworth (by leave of Lord Leconfield); and the Lansdowne 851 (British Museum). Of Chaucer's Minor Poems—the MSS of the Canterbury Tales,—all, or nearly all, the MSS will be printed, so as to secure all the existing evidence for the true text. To secure the fidelity and uniform treatment of the texts, Mr. F. J. Furnivall will read all with their MSS.[143]

Furnivall was the head of the Chaucer Society until his death, and was the editor of most of its publications of the earliest and best texts of Chaucer, including, of course, the huge Six-Text Edition of *The Canterbury Tales*. He was succeeded as director by Walter W. Skeat. John Munro, speaking of the EETS, gives the following account of the founding of the Chaucer Society:

> It became obvious to Furnivall that the Society could not give adequate attention to the great men like Wyclif, Chaucer, and Lydgate. . . . At the suggestion of Henry Bradshaw, to whom that generation of scholars owed much (he taught Professor Skeat to read manuscripts, for instance), Furnivall, in 1868, founded the Chaucer Society.[144]

Henry Bradshaw, Cambridge University librarian,[145] did more than teach Skeat to read manuscripts or merely "suggest" the foundation of the Chaucer Society. He was the real motivating force behind it. By 1863, he was well known among students of literature for his extensive knowledge of Chaucer, though he had not then published anything on the subject. In January, 1864, Alexander Macmillan asked him to work with Earle and Aldis Wright on a library edition of Chaucer's works, but although Chaucer engaged much of Bradshaw's attention at this period in his career, he never seemed to find time

[143]*Chaucer Society Report*, January, 1873, p. 16. "In as much also as the parallel arrangement will necessitate the alteration of the places of certain tales in some of the MSS, a print of each MS will be issued separately, and will follow the order of its original." Ibid. "The Society's publications are issued in two series of which the first contains the different texts of Chaucer's works; and the second such originals of and essays on those as can be procured, with other illustrative treatises and Supplementary Tales." Ibid.

[144]Munro, *Furnivall*, pp. xlviii–xlix.

[145]Henry Bradshaw, scholar and antiquarian, was librarian at Cambridge University from 1867 to 1886. Furnivall once described him as "the great Cambridge discoverer of fragments in unthought-of-places."

to get down to it. On March 21, 1865, he wrote: "I am thick in correspondence with Furnivall just now about his Early English Text Society. He writes (letters) with the most perfect fluency, and gets through an immense amount of work besides (I wish I could)."[146] Until 1867, Bradshaw's correspondence with Furnivall concerned the EETS, but thereafter it was chiefly about Chaucer. Bradshaw's notebooks throughout this period are full of notes on the poet—rhyme endings, pronunciation, orthography, and so on. On the subject of the spelling in Chaucer he wrote to Furnivall in August, 1867:

> About the Chaucer affairs, of course my whole object is to be upset or confirmed by Morris, Ellis, and others. What I insist on is that until some of you begin to *edit* books, there is no chance for any of us learning anything. When I give you my skeleton of the "Canterbury Tales," in my spelling, you will be able to say, "what gross ignorance! He doesn't even know that the imperative singular in that verb has no *e* at the end" and so on. . . . Out of seventeen copies, sixteen read *stryve* and one reads *stryf* (which Morris says is the right form), and that not one of the oldest manuscripts of the poem.[147]

Bradshaw's theory was that a close analysis and comparison of rhymes would help scholars determine the contemporary pronunciation of many doubtful words, which would then clarify the derivation of the words (that is, whether they came from the Latin, French, or some other source) and that this in turn would help them ascertain the spelling and provide a philological explanation of the growth of the language. In 1867, Bradshaw printed *The Skeleton of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales* as "an attempt to distinguish the several fragments of the work as left by the author," with the intention of circulating copies "among those who take an interest in the textual criticism of our early authors and especially of Chaucer" so that "they might see how very far we are as yet from the possibility of a satisfactory edition of Chaucer."[148]

[146]Prothero, *Memoir of Henry Bradshaw*, p. 117. The parenthesis of "letters" may differentiate Furnivall's "letter" prose from his other (e.g. prefatory), less successful prose.

[147]Ibid., p. 212. In another letter to Furnivall, Bradshaw writes, "Where is Child's paper on the final "e" in Chaucer? I am so grossly ignorant of all recent publications that I am glad to come to you for aid." Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 50.

[148]Prothero, *Memoir of Henry Bradshaw*, p. 213.

G. W. Prothero, Bradshaw's biographer, writes of the founding of the Chaucer society:

> In his own mind, Dr. Furnivall tells me, one of its principal objects was to collect the materials on which Bradshaw might base a standard edition of the poet. Writing to him in September 1867, Dr. Furnivall says, "The more I think of the Chaucer Society the more I like it, and if you'd say that you'd help, in choice of texts, etc. and on committee, I should start it at once.[149]

Actually Bradshaw was opposed to Furnivall's idea of the Six-Text Edition of *The Canterbury Tales* and thought that each of the selected manuscripts should be edited separately. Nevertheless, Furnivall visited Cambridge in 1868 and evidently won Bradshaw's promise to give regular help with the society. During the rest of 1868 there was extensive correspondence between the two. According to Prothero:

> . . . under the stimulus of Dr. Furnivall's sympathy and enthusiasm, Bradshaw for some time threw himself warmly into the work of the Chaucer Society. Letter followed letter in rapid succession, as was his wont when he was in the mood for writing. In one of these letters he visualises the whole of the journey to Canterbury in his mind's eye.[150]

Here Furnivall can be seen once again in the role of the entrepreneur, urging scholars to undertake vital work for his societies. In a letter to Bradshaw on February 8, 1871, he exclaimed: "Don't be absurd. You're the man to *edit* Chaucer, if only you will. I'm the man to print the texts, if only you'll add your notes of MSS. to mine, or tell me what books to look in to find out the MSS."[151] Throughout, Furnivall makes clear his reliance upon others for guidance in matters he is not qualified to judge. On April 1, 1865, he wrote to Bradshaw:

> There is nothing trustworthy written about language as a test of date, as far as I know, & with the extraordinary difference in Vocabulary & Construction between Piers Plowman 1362 & Chaucer's early pieces—not ten years later, I suppose—I do not see that any trustworthy rule can be given, but for myself I should trust the instinct of a man like Morris or yourself on the matter. . . .

[149]Ibid., p. 214.

[150]Ibid., pp. 214-15.

[151]Cambridge University Library, Bradshaw Papers.

So now you learned party, good by, [*sic*] & have a glorious Spring trip, & come back & edit no end of jolly old books.[152]

Furnivall liked Bradshaw and considered him a close friend; he frequently invited Bradshaw to visit when he came up to London from Cambridge: "It didn't occur to me till 5m after leaving Thurs, that I was a most inhospitable friend for not asking you to dinner. But we never do have any one to dine because we can't give them good dinners. If you'll take what you can get, will you come tomorrow, or to tea tonight?"[153]

Like Browning and others, however, Bradshaw had to pay the price for his alliance with Furnivall.A letter from Furnivall to Bradshaw dated September 17, 1879, reads:

Don't be put out, there's a good fellow. Be glad that your letter had the effect we both wanted—to get from Bullen the order to alter the Brit. Mus. Catal.[ogue]. His answer to me seems to imply that he wouldn't alter it. I said, if he didn't, I'd make a public protest against him. Your letter coming and I bowled it off to him (stipulating for its return. I enclose it now), because it both snubs the Catalogue & gave the information for enabling Miller to correct it. I beg pardon for doing what you don't like, but still I'm glad I did it, because it settled the matter with Bullen. However, I'll not again show a letter of yours to any one else without your leave. . . .

Yesterday, larking with my boy & a schoolfellow of his on Hampstead Heath, I sprained my ancle again, & so couldn't get to Mus$^{m}$ today.[154]

There is good evidence to suggest that Bradshaw was a far more meticulous and fastidious editor than Furnivall. He was always reluctant to publish until "something certain and final could be produced." Bradshaw writes:

I look forward to a standard edition of Chaucer's work, which now does not exist. . . . I cannot bear the thought of any publication *coming forth with authority*, when it is merely the result of a few hasty and crude speculations, which a little fair preliminary discussion would get rid of.[155]

[152]Cambridge University Library, Bradshaw Papers.

[153]Cambridge University Library, Bradshaw Correspondence, Add. 2591 (2), fol. 379, letter, July 12, 1867.

[154]Cambridge University Library, Bradshaw Papers.

[155]Prothero, *Memoir of Henry Bradshaw*, p. 217.

On January 24, 1869, he wrote to Furnivall from Cambridge:

> I cannot conceive a *copyist* inventing such a line as that found in your four MSS. and further than this, you will see that it points to a possibility that in the warmer part of the day, the pilgrims did dismount, if they came to any fresh green place, for the purpose of hearing a good story told more comfortably.
>
> Don't let it go to press just yet as you have got them copied, as there are several points I must have slightly amended, especially those copied at Oxford, and your introductory notice. I will see about them the first moment I can.[156]

Frequently in his letters he makes blunt statements about Furnivall's editing methods: "I am afraid you will hardly persuade me of the profit (to your subscribers) of printing in that harum scarum way. If there are half a dozen accessible poems—you are really bound to give your readers the best text you can."[157] And:

> You are very aggravating sometimes, particularly about the poisonous way in which you insist on editing and prefacing your books, but I am afraid I cannot take away my subscription from you. I shall want all my four Chaucers. I must have two myself; and of the other two, one goes off to Sweden, and the other somewhere else.[158]

Furnivall's reaction to Bradshaw's fault-finding letters was straightforward enough; he simply wanted Bradshaw to get the job done with the same degree of application and as much dispatch as he was accustomed to: ". . . if you were producing, and getting produced, as much as I am, and getting as much pitched into, you'd be less particular about little matters, and more tolerant."[159] On May 22, 1871, Furnivall wrote from Walnut-Tree Cottage, Egham:

> I'm just home from picking bluebells with my boy, after a walk on Runnymeade, & am afraid I take your scolding very easily, tho' I really am always sorry when you take offence at anything I print or write. But indeed you do make mountains of mole hills very often. Anyway, do send me the Chaucer revises or you'll have me up again, saying something more awful than ever.[160]

[156]King's College Library, Furnivall Papers.

[157]Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 49, April 5, 1866.

[158]Prothero, *Memoir of Henry Bradshaw*, p. 217.

[159]Ibid., p. 218.

[160]Cambridge University Library, Bradshaw Papers.

In a letter to William Carew Hazlitt, dated August 16, 1867, Furnivall complains: "Bradshaw ought to tell us before it's too late. We have just wasted 15 (pounds) by his delaying some corrections." Then he relents: "But he's a good fellow at heart, I believe, and is doing some fine work on Chaucer."[161]

Furnivall makes no attempt to conceal from his readers his habit of rushing texts into print; he simply tells them that there is not always time to get hold of the best manuscript. His frankest admissions are found not in a Chaucer publication but in his "Forewords" to *The Fifty Earliest English Wills in the Court of Probate* (1882), where he writes: "The Notes, foot and end, are not so full as I could have wisht; but I had not time to fish for more";[162] and in his "Forewords" to *Political, Religious and Love Poems* (1866):

> Of the pieces now issued some have been printed elsewhere, and of most, perhaps better texts exist; but the time that it takes to ascertain whether a poem has been printed or not, which is the best MS. of it, in which points the versions differ, etc., etc., is so great, that after some experience I find the shortest way for a man engaged in other work, but wishing to give some time to the Society, is to make himself a foolometer and book-possessor-ometer for the majority of his fellow-members, and print whatever he either does not know, or cannot get at easily, leaving others with more leisure to print the best texts. *He* wants *some* text, and that at once.

As if to mitigate this extraordinary editorial statement, Furnivall adds in a footnote: "This excuse is not intended as a justification for an Editor to take no trouble about his work. It only asks that he may be allowed to judge how the trouble he can, and must, take, can be best applied."[163]

Furnivall's frantic rushing about, his insistence on the speedy production of Chaucerian and other texts, and his numerous admissions that he did not have enough time to research his materials exhaustively were not exceptional. Speed was a characteristic of life in mid- and late-Victorian England. In his *Autobiographic Memoirs*, Frederic Harrison, recalling an earlier time, the 1830s, writes nostalgically:

[161]British Library, MS 38899, fol. 446.

[162]Furnivall, ed., *The Fifty Earliest English Wills in the Court of Probate*, p. xv.

[163]Furnivall, ed., *The Complaynt of Criste*, p. ix.

> People did not run about the town or the land as we do. . . . They travelled less often, wrote fewer letters, . . . and did not have Mudies cart at their doors twice a week. . . . We are whirled about, and hooted around, and rung up as if we were all parcels, booking clerks, or officer boys. . . . . When I was a child, . . . we did not hurry to catch trains. . . . Letters took far longer to write, and to deliver, but we wrote one instead of ten in a morning, and it was a *letter*—not an illegible scrawl.[164]

The speed of living produced by faster locomotion of goods and letters and people made a great impression on the Victorians, and they simply increased the number of things to be done in a day. Furnivall was fascinated by the arrival of railways because, as Munro writes, "they were democratic and enabled his working-men friends to get out with him in the days before bicycles for a Sunday on the Surrey hills." He also liked to contrast his first seven-hour coach journey to Cambridge, in October, 1842, with "those hour and a quarter railway journeys of after days, which enabled him to begin work on his beloved Chaucer in the University Library before 10 A.M."[165]

Despite Bradshaw's concern about rushed texts, Furnivall was obviously pleased with the expeditious manner in which the Chaucer Society started out on its important career. In his first report to the society in March, 1869, he boasted that during its first year of operation the society not only had produced the first part of its Six-Text Edition of the best manuscripts of *The Canterbury Tales* but had very likely settled for the first time in 450 years the order of Chaucer's tales and absolved the poet of the charge of muddling his greatest work. This alone, Furnivall suggested, marked a historic event in Chaucerian criticism. Among other achievements for 1868, he reported that the society "in conjunction with its mother-and-grandmother societies," the EETS and the Philological Society, had published part one of Alexander Ellis's *Early English Pronunciation, with Special Reference to Chaucer and Shakspere*, which broke new ground on the subject and also contained the American scholar Francis Child's valuable papers on the use of the final *-e* by Chaucer and Gower.[166]

[164]Frederic Harrison, *Autobiographic Memoirs*, 1:18–19. See W. R. Greg, *Literary and Social Judgements*, 2:272.

[165]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. xii.

[166]Frederick James Furnivall, *First Report to the Chaucer Society*, March, 1869, p. 1.

It was about this time that Furnivall first met Tennyson. During a talk on "Some Famous Men I Have Met" at the Working Men's College a few years before he died, Furnivall told his audience:

> In 1867 . . . I made the acquaintance of Tennyson, of whom I was a great admirer. He was then living in a house just out of Park Lane, and I first met him in connexion with the Chaucer Society. We had been getting Chaucer's poems into order, so that we could understand his development; and we had then just printed the six best manuscripts of them.[167]

The monumental Six-Text Edition of *The Canterbury Tales*, which provided a mass of accurate material on which later editors have built their texts, occupied Furnivall for eight years. It was dedicated to Child, "in Admiration of himself and his Nation, and in the Hope that he will teach many of them to love and study Chaucer, as he has done, and does."[168] *The Pall Mall Gazette*'s review of the Six-Text Edition includes the following comment: "Literary inquiries, just as much as scientific, must be based on an exact knowledge of facts; and from this point of view we can hardly praise too much the labours of the Chaucer Society."[169] Here is exemplified the nineteenth-century transfer of scientific concepts to the study of literature. Furnivall and his fellow workers were happy to be seen in the service of authenticity and scientific fact-finding—an approach to literary scholarship that was reflected in the increasing flood of monographs and in the contributions to *Notes and Queries*. The order of the tales had, of course, been considered before Furnivall's time. Tyrwhitt was the first editor to deal with the problem, and his order was followed by others. In 1868, however, Furnivall published "Gaps and Order of the Canterbury Tales" in *Notes and Queries*, "having been disappointed

[167]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. 18. See *Edinburgh Review*, vol. 132, pp. 1–45.

[168]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. xlix. The colored woodcuts of the tale-tellers were done by W. H. Hooper, one of the "shots" of the Nineteeth Middlesex and an old friend of Furnivall's. Ibid. In a review of *The Canterbury Tales* in *Spectator*, November, 1869, p. 1369, the reviewer hails the work of the Chaucer Society and says that Furnivall's Preface is "among the most perfect pieces of work he has produced." He praises Furnivall's "little intricacies of detail," such as how long the pilgrimage lasted and how many meals the pilgrims ate.

[169]*Pall Mall Gazette*, October 31, 1871, p. 12. See Frederick James Furnivall, "Recent Work at Chaucer," p. 383, where he presents the problems of the Chaucer Society and a history of Chaucer editions. He states (p. 393) that the article was written "first to try and wake a few men up from the disgraceful sluggishness and ignorance of the mass of Englishmen about Chaucer, and show them the work that is being done at him."

in the hope that a friend who knows all about this matter would tell me all he knew," an obvious reference to the unproductive Bradshaw. In this article Furnivall draws up a table, and, taking the Ellesmere manuscript as his guide, arranges the contents of the other manuscripts by it so that variations from the Ellesmere and from manuscript to manuscript can easily be seen.[170]

The Chaucer Society had its setbacks as well as its successes. Like Furnivall's other societies, it was constantly short of funds, and in the *Second Report to the Chaucer Society*, in February, 1870, Furnivall makes his usual complaint that "in England's thirty millions we can reckon only some seventy souls who care to make the small yearly sacrifice we ask for Chaucer's fame." He concludes by expressing the hope that "as the work goes on, literary England and her Colonies will wake up to a sense of their duty in this matter."[171] Writing of the Chaucer Society's work in September, 1871, the *Athenaeum* comments, "There can be no doubt of the great value and usefulness of these publications to all students of Early English, and we only regret that the Society does not number more subscribers."[172]

Furnivall's "cooperative" system did not always run smoothly. For instance, the job of balancing the accounts fell to him because "a volunteer in London" did not materialize for some time. In 1871, Furnivall recorded with obvious relief that Arthur G. Snelgrove had come forward and prepared the "cash account" for the three years of the society's work, while Child had become the secretary for the United States. Actually it was Child who supplied the money that enabled the Chaucer Society to start its work. In 1888, Furnivall had to appeal in the *Academy* for persons to come forward to offer to help the society. He required, he said, someone with access to a large library to compile "The Praise of Chaucer"—that is, all allusions to the poet since his own day, and "a history and record man" to write "England in Chaucer's Time."[173]

[170]See Henry Bradshaw, *The Skeleton of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales*; John Koch, *The Chronology of Chaucer's Writings*. Furnivall discusses the matter in great detail in his Temporary Preface to the Chaucer Society's Six-Text Edition, pt. 1 (1868), and tries to show the right order of the tales, the days and stages of the pilgrimage, and so on.

[171]Frederick James Furnivall, *Second Report to the Chaucer Society*, February, 1870, p. 1.

[172]*Athenaeum*, September, 1871, p. 392. See also *Edinburgh Review* 132 (July, 1870):7.

[173]*Academy*, December, 1888, p. 403.

Periodically (especially in later years) Furnivall refers to the burden of the work to which he constantly subjected himself. Sometimes there is an oblique reference to the possibility of failing health, but more often it is a statement of regret that his many commitments have forced him to neglect certain of his undertakings. After calculating in 1872 that "*Troilus*, the *Minor Poems*, and *Boece* will probably take three years, so that by 1877, the Text work of the Society ought to be done," he adds the note:

> If I should die, or have to give-up the work, and no other volunteer will finish it, a paid Editor must be employed. . . . The pay for the *Parson's Tale* should be liberal. The collation of one MS has been nearly enough for me; but there are a dozen or more goings-over it to come. Oh dear![174]

In his seventh report to the society, in March, 1877, he admits that his work for the New Shakspere Society and the EETS in the summer and autumn of 1876[175] prevented him from doing more for the Chaucer Society.[176]

Yet Furnivall still found time and energy to unleash an attack on W. Minto's Chaucer article in *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (an attack that in some respects anticipates his quarrel with Swinburne in the New Shakspere Society). Furnivall charges:

> Mr. W. Minto had *done* his Chaucer article in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, and unluckily justified the use of the equivocal word (*done*) which I purposely applied (last Report, p. 6) to his then coming performance. . . . He says that no broad tales are told about Clerks, as if the Miller's and Reeve's Tales didn't exist, . . . he can't see that the *Pity* is Chaucer's first poem, and he has some other comical mistakes which give a reader with knowledge a hearty chuckle.

After referring to other indifferent critics of Chaucer, Furnivall concludes, "We must dub these fellows 'The Chaucer-mangling Association, W. Minto & Co., unlimited,' and protect our poet against such libellous attacks."[177]

[174]Frederick James Furnivall, *Third Report to the Chaucer Society*, January, 1872, p. 8.

[175]"Forewords and side-notes to, and seeing through the press," p. 1n.

[176]Ibid., pp. 1-2.

[177]*Seventh Report to the Chaucer Society*, March, 1877, pp. 5-6. *The Complaint Unto Pity* is not now usually assigned to a date earlier than that of *The Book of the Duchess*.

About this time Furnivall went to Dublin to deliver two lectures on Chaucer at Trinity College, lectures which were "in the highest degree illuminating and stimulating,"[178] according to Edward Dowden, who had become professor of English there in 1867. On May 3, 1875, the *Dublin Daily Express* reports that Furnivall's two lectures on "The Life and Works of Chaucer"; were "warmly applauded," and the *Dublin Morning Mail* reports that "the audience was large and fashionable." A sour note is struck, however, by the *Freemason's Journal* of May 6, 1875: "Mr. Furnivall is a Protestant, it may be assumed; but when next he comes to Dublin to speak of the Canterbury Pilgrims, the less he sneers at members of the monastic order the more admired his prelections will become." Dowden later recalled that Furnivall was "surprised, and for a moment disconcerted as by something unintelligible, when he learnt that some of his harmless words on mediaeval pilgrimages had—as it was represented—offended the susceptibilities of a few persons in his Irish audience."[179] Furnivall also delivered a biographical lecture on Chaucer in London on February 7, 1875,[180] and two lectures at the Royal Institution of Great Britain on May 13, 1876 ("Chaucer's Birth and Early Life") and on May 20, 1876 ("Later Life Details and My Chaucer Society's Work").[181]

Another huge undertaking, a parallel-text edition of the *Minor Poems* of Chaucer, spanned the years 1871 to 1879. The edition was dedicated to Bernhard ten Brink. Next came the parallel-text *Troilus* (1881-82), which was dedicated to Henry Bradshaw, "in Chaucer Matters, my Guide, Philosopher, and Friend, to help whom my Chaucer Work was first begun." These and other publications, including *The Romaunt of the Rose, Boece, The Treatise of the Astrolabe*, autotypes of manuscripts, and rhyme indexes, belong to the society's First Series, which contained ninety-seven volumes. Furnivall fought hard and long to claim (correctly) *The Romaunt of the Rose* for Chaucer, but was finally forced to give in when Skeat

[178]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. 36.

[179]Ibid.

[180]*Free Sunday Advocate*, March, 1875, p. 150.

[181]Some of his lecture notes and comments are in King's College Library, Furnivall Papers.

found additional evidence against it in that it is written in a northern dialect.[182] William Rossetti's *Chaucer's Troylus and Cryseyde, Compared with Boccaccio's Filostrato* was undertaken for Furnivall and the Chaucer Society in 1868. At that time no one had yet determined Chaucer's debt to Boccaccio, and Furnivall decided that this question had to be settled by the society. He asked Rossetti to look into the details, and the latter collated Chaucer's poem, line by line, with Boccaccio's; translated, line by line, all the passages of Boccaccio which had been translated or paraphrased by Chaucer; and supplied a summary of the remaining passages. He found that "less than a third of the lines in Chaucer are traceable to his Italian prototype."[183]

When Furnivall applied, without success, for the secretaryship of the Royal Academy of Arts in 1873, he gave the following account of his pioneer work on Chaucer:

> With the help of honoured, fellow-workers, I have cleared the shams from the gallery of Chaucer's works, have set the true pictures in their right order of time, and arranged his best in the sequence of compartments in which he painted it, so that at length the blossom, the ripe fruit, and (alas!) the dying leaves, of his genius can be seen in their true state, and men induced to honour and to love him as they should. . . . By this work, too, I have made plain, that the humourful bright time of Chaucer's merry Tales was preceded by a long sad early manhood of hopeless and disappointed love, which adds to the pathos of his memory, and shows why in his younger days he wrote of the widowed John of Gaunt, and jilted Troilus, the forsaken Anelida, and other victims of Inconstancy's wandering will.[184]

The usual indignant patriotism is here, and so is the nineteenth-century emphasis on the evolutionary and biological approach to literary

[182]See Walter W. Skeat, "Why the 'Romaunt of the Rose' Is Not Chaucer's," *Chaucer Society Publications*, 2d ser., 1884. On September 28, 1868, Furnivall wrote to Bradshaw: "I haven't the least desire to convert you to the Romaunt being Chaucer's. It simply is so, for me." Cambridge University Library, Bradshaw Correspondence, Add. 2591 (3), fol. 449. The second series contained, in Furnivall's words, "such originals of and essays on these [texts] as can be procured with other illustrative treatises, and Supplementary Tales." Among prominent contributors to this series were Skeat, Koch, Henry Littlehales, George Lyman Kittredge, Marion Henry Spielman, and Alexander J. Ellis.

[183]William Michael Rossetti, *Some Reminiscences of William Michael Rossetti*, 2:399-400.

[184]Munro, *Furnivall*, pp. l-li. When outlining his new ordering of the *Minor Poems* in his *Third Report to the Chaucer Society* in 1872, Furnivall also refers to the new light that has been thrown on the poet's life by "showing that his early manhood was spent in a long hopeless love,

criticism that was later to be the principal reason for Furnivall's notorious battle with Swinburne. Furnivall, who liked to proclaim himself "a scientific botanist," could not resist casting in botanical terms his findings about the sequence and development of Chaucer's works.

The successes enjoyed by the natural sciences during this period did much to encourage the application of biological evolutionism to literature generally. J. A. Symonds, for instance, clearly conceived of literary evolution in terms of Darwinian biology, and in his paper "The Application of Evolutionary Principles to Art and Literature" (1890) he propounded the theory that "a genre runs a well-defined course of germination, expansion, efflorescence, and decay."[185] Symonds was saved from some of the worst consequences of such a scientific scheme by an innate aestheticism that Furnivall did not have. The latter was content to ferret out the factual details of Chaucer's life, construct mathematical tables (called "Trial-Tables") of variants from the Ellesmere manuscript, and proclaim Chaucer's virtues with uncritical and sentimental adulation. William Wimsatt and Cleanth Brooks write:

> The peculiar tone of 19th century literary study, at least in England, would appear to result from a working unison between two forces which one might offhand think of as quite disparate—the force of hard-headed, sceptical, fact-finding, textual, bibliographical and biographical antiquarianism, and both augmenting this force and being augmented by it, the force of devotion to poetic genius, to the personality, originality, mind and emotion, virtues and vices, life, suffering and death of the literary creator.[186]

which gave rise to all his sad Compleyntes and made him sing the woes of Troilus forsaken by his 'lufsom lady deere,' " (p. 2). Among his supporters for the Royal Academy post were Tennyson, William Morris, Charles Kingsley, Tom Hughes, Hippolyte Taine, Paul Meyer, Delius, ten Brink, Henry Morley, Dowden, Trench, J. R. Seeley, the Marquess of Bath, Henry Hucks Gibbs (Lord Aldenham), Vernon Lushington, Richard Morris, Alexander Macmillan, and Louis Bonaparte.

[185]Arthur Symonds, *Essays, Speculative and Suggestive*, pp. 42–84.

[186]William Wimsatt and Cleanth Brooks, *Literary Criticism: A Short History*, p. 533. Apparently there was no limit to Furnivall's antiquarian curiosity. W. H. Eyre writes, in Munro, *Furnivall*, pp. 44–45: "My acquaintance with my old friend Dr. F. J. Furnivall was a sort of by-product of a furious controversy that arose between him and my then partner Walter Rye, the well-known Norfolk and general antiquary, about the exact significance of which I am very uncertain. . . . I have an idea it related as to which of two or three equally apocryphal cookshops . . . were 'used' (as they say of tap-rooms) by Chaucer and his inmates,

This describes perfectly Furnivall's work not only on Chaucer but also on Shakespeare and all his other literary "heroes."

After the foundation of the society Furnivall and others had set to work on the records, enabling scholars to say definitely what is *not* true in earlier Chaucer biographies, such as, for instance, those of William Godwin (1803), and Sir Harris Nicolas (1844). Skeat's "Life of Chaucer," prefixed to his 1894 edition of the *Works*, pulls together all the important discoveries made up to that time, particularly Furnivall's important finds in the Public Records Office, published in the *Athenaeum* in 1873 and 1874. From 1875 to 1900 the complete *Life Records of Chaucer* appeared.

Early nineteenth-century attitudes to Chaucer were generally highly enthusiastic: the *Quarterly Review* of July, 1814, calls him "a star of the first magnitude," and the *Edinburgh Review* of July, 1830, claims that "in manner and expression" he is "the most Homeric of our poets." Much of the appreciation was uncritical, however, and not really based upon a thorough knowledge of the texts. The two crucial events that inaugurated the scholarly and critical study of Chaucer—one of the great literary achievements of the nineteenth century—were Child's brilliant essay of 1862 on the use of the final *-e* in the Harleian manuscript (7334) and, of course, the foundation of the Chaucer Society by Furnivall in 1868.

The Chaucer Society made important contributions of four kinds: the printing of all the best Chaucer manuscripts; the establishment of the chronology of Chaucer's works, including the arrangement of *The Canterbury Tales*; the final settlement of the Chaucer canon; and the discovery of many new facts about Chaucer's life and family.

Apart from Thomas Wright's edition of *The Canterbury Tales* for the Percy Society (from Harleian manuscript 7334 with additions and collations from the Lansdowne manuscript) in 1848–51, the printing of many significant Chaucer manuscripts was accomplished by Furnivall. That made possible Arthur Gilman's edition of the poems in 1880 (*The Poetical Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*) and then in 1894–97 the edition of Chaucer's work by Skeat, which, together with the slightly later Globe edition of Pollard, Heath, Lidell, and

in the city of London. . . . Rye was at that time on the staff of the *Athenaeum*, while Furnivall ruled the (antiquarian) roast [*sic*] of the *Academy*, from the columns of which two journals many shrewd knocks were interchanged."

McCormick (1898), answered the demand throughout the nineteenth century for a complete critical text of Chaucer's works.[187]

The impetus given to the reading of Chaucer by the Chaucer Society is indicated by the increase in published editions of his works between 1851 and 1910. According to Caroline Spurgeon, during that period 100 editions of selected or single poems (original text) were issued, compared with 9 between 1801 and 1850, and 25 editions of *The Canterbury Tales* (modernized or paraphrased) were published compared to 4 from 1801 to 1851.[188]

In the final settlement of the genuine poems, many scholars have contributed—in particular ten Brink, Bradshaw, Furnivall, Koch, and Skeat. Their findings are outlined in Koch's *Chronology of Chaucer's Writings* (1890), Skeat's *Chaucer Canon* (1900), and elsewhere. The life-records printed by Godwin and Sir Harris Nicolas have already been noted. According to Caroline Spurgeon, however, it was the discoveries made by Furnivall's own extensive research and that of others stimulated by him that made it possible to publish a completed volume of Chaucer's life-records in 1900, the poet's quincentenary.[189]

The Chaucer Society was dissolved after forty-four years of service, having produced a series of texts and treatises unequaled by any organization except the EETS. James Russell Lowell wrote from the United States on July 15, 1871: "I look upon the E.E.T. & the Chaucer Societies as by a long way the best & weightiest service that has been done us. With their volumes to back me, I dare look even a German Professor full in the eye."[190] The work of the society inaugurated a new era in Chaucerian criticism. Furnivall's parallel

[187]William Morris's Kelmscott Chaucer came out in 1896. See *Gentleman's Magazine* 268 (1890), 215-16, where Sylvanus Urban (the pen name of Joseph Knight, editor of *Notes and Queries*, for the articles he wrote for *Gentleman's Magazine* from 1870 to 1905) calls for a bibliography of early Chaucer editions. See also ibid., p. 323.

[188]Caroline Spurgeon, Introduction, *Five Hundred Years of Chaucer Criticism and Allusion, 1357-1900*, p. lxxi.

[189]Ibid., p. lxxii. A. W. Ward claimed, in an introductory note to his *Chaucer* (London, 1878; reissued 1881), that the book "could not have been written at all without the aid of the Publications of the Chaucer Society, and more especially of the labours of its director, Mr. Furnivall." The dissolution of the Chaucer Society was announced in 1912. A complete list of Chaucer Society publications to 1907 is given by Eleanor P. Hammond in *Chaucer: A Biographical Manual*, pp. 523-41.

[190]Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 498. See also Derek Brewer, *Geoffrey Chaucer*, p. 323.

Six-Text Edition of *The Canterbury Tales* (the most important of all his publications), and his *Trial-Forewords to My Parallel Text Edition of Chaucer's Minor Poems* (1871) provided the foundation for much of the subsequent research and criticism in the field. It is no exaggeration to say that the point of growth in modern Chaucerian scholarship came with the founding of the society and the publication of Skeat's six-volume Oxford Chaucer, because since that time the impetus and enthusiasm given by Furnivall and Skeat to Chaucer studies have shown no signs of abating in Britain or the United States. Needless to say, much of their original research and comment has now passed into the ground-work of all Chaucerian scholarship.

CHAPTER 6

# Founder of Literary Societies — Later Period

FURNIVALL'S LATER group of literary societies did not produce the notable results of the Early English Text Society and the Chaucer Society. There were many reasons for this, one of which was Furnivall's tendency to bring his societies into disrepute by waging verbal wars on anyone who got in his way. The demise of the New Shakspere Society, for instance, was largely the result of his extraordinary row with Swinburne. Nevertheless, taken together, the New Shakspere, Browning, Shelley, and Wyclif societies produced a valuable body of texts and criticism that did much to foster the study and appreciation of the authors for whom the societies were founded.

## *The New Shakspere Society* (1873)

In the autumn of 1873, only five years after he formed the Chaucer Society and the Ballad Society, Furnivall published a prospectus for the New Shakspere Society, which was to "do honour to Shakspere, make out the succession of his plays and thereby the growth of his mind and art, promote the intelligent study of him and print texts and illustrate his work and times."[1] This confident proclamation makes it clear that Shakespeare was to be given the same nineteenth-century scientific, biographical, and historical treatment as Chaucer. Furnivall the "scientific botanist" was ready to establish by statis-

[1] *New Shakspere Society Transactions*, 1874, Appendix, p. 6.

tical, objective means the correct chronology of the plays, which would not only reveal the "germination, efflorescence and decay" of Shakespeare's art but also match the successive phases of his life. Also, and of special interest to Furnivall, the studies would, under the influence of German romantic and scientific conceptions of literary development, reveal social and political phenomena of all kinds—institutions, customs, manners, beliefs—in the Elizabethan period.

Furnivall's timing could hardly have been better. The earlier Victorian school of Shakespeareans, represented by J. P. Collier, Peter Cunningham, James O. Halliwell-Phillipps, Alexander Dyce, Thomas Wright, and others, was for various reasons on the way out. The Collier scandal was possibly the most cogent reason,[2] but it is also accurate to say that a new school was developing which, armed with new techniques, was replacing the earlier emphasis on textual emendation and "antiquarian illustration" with a new concern for the study of Shakespeare's contemporaries, his times, and the development of his art.[3] Furnivall contrasted the old and new schools as follows:

> Antiquarian illustration, emendation, and verbal criticism—to say nothing of forgery, or at least, publication of forg'd documents—were of the first school. The subject of growth, the oneness of Shakspere, the links between his successive plays, the distinctive characteristics of each period and its contrast with the others, the treatment of the same or like incidents, etc. in the different periods of Shakspere's life—this subject in all its branches, is the special business of the present, the second school of Victorian students.

Furnivall had already worked out the development of Chaucer as demonstrated in his works and could now claim:

> Unless a man's works are studied in the order in which he wrote them, you *cannot* get at a right understanding of his mind, you cannot follow the growth of it. This has been specially brought home to me by my work at Chaucer. Until I saw that his *Pity* was his first original work, the key of his life was undiscovered.[4]

[2]The extent of the forgeries is discussed in George F. Warner, *Catalogue of the Dulwich Manuscripts* (London, 1881). For an article by Furnivall on "Collier and Edward III," see *The Hour*, April 7, 1874.

[3]See S. Schoenbaum, *Shakespeare's Lives*, pp. 383–526.

[4]"The Founder's Prospectus of the New Shakspere Society," *New Shakspere Society Transactions*, 1874, Appendix, pp. 6–7.

Others, like Walter Bagehot (*Shakespeare, the Man*, 1853),[5] had already attempted to see Shakespeare "as he was," but previous biographical work was properly regarded as of dubious worth, and the society would defer only to Halliwell-Phillipps's exhaustive studies of documentary records and would concentrate on Shakespeare's writings. Furnivall had also studied the connection between the political movements and social conditions and the literature of medieval times, and like such other important scholars as Thomas Carlyle, Leslie Stephen (for whom literature provided "the noise of the wheels of history"), and the great German critic Georg Gervinus, he was now eager to show how the development of literature is connected in all its phases with the history of the nation. As for Shakespeare, in the course of his work on the Tudor ballads for the Ballad Society, Furnivall had collected a great deal of valuable evidence about the political and social affairs of Elizabethan England. On a visit to Ashford, Derbyshire, in 1888, Furnivall was delighted to make a rare find in literary antiquarianism. In the local church the rector pointed out five "Maidens' Garlands" on the wall that had been carried at maidens' funerals "80 or 100 years ago." Furnivall informed him that "these garlands are Ophelia's 'virgin crants' in Hamlet. . . . Your folk have unknowingly kept up the custom immortalised by Shakspere. . . . appeal to them to revive it if only for Shakspere's sake." In the *Derby Mercury* for August 29, 1888, a correspondent writes, "Henceforth, Ashford Church with its paper garlands or crantses should be visited by all Shakespeare students far and near."[6]

In the "Founder's Prospectus of the New Shakspere Society," Furnivall makes his familiar appeal to the nation's honor and goes on to define the society's projected activities: the establishment of a Shakespearean canon of authorship and chronology.[7] In his first address to the new society at its meeting at 8:00 P.M. on Friday, March 13, at University College, Gower Street, he elaborated further on the purpose of the new Shakspere Society, which was to be,

[5]Richard H. Hutton, ed., *Literary Studies*, 1:126–72.

[6]King's College Library, Furnivall Papers.

[7]See *New Shakspere Society Transactions*, 1874, Appendix, p. 6.

> by a very close study of the metrical and phraseological peculiarities of Shakspere, to get his plays as nearly as possible into the order in which he wrote them; to check that order by the higher tests of imaginative power, knowledge of life, self-restraint in expression, weight of thought, depth of purpose; and then to use that revised order for the purpose of studying the progress and meaning of Shakspere's mind, the passage of it from the fun and word-play, the lightness, the passion, of the Comedies of Youth, through the patriotism . . . of the Histories of Middle Age to the great Tragedies dealing with the deepest questions of man in Later Life; and then at last to the poet's peaceful and quiet home-life again in Stratford, where he ends with his Prospero and Miranda, his Leontes finding again his wife and daughter in Hermione and Perdita . . . . The other deeper questions will, I trust, be treated by the best heads in England, Mr. Tennyson, Mr. Spedding and the like—if like there be.[8]

In its deference the last sentence echoes a statement Furnivall made later about his qualifications to direct a Shakespeare Society, after objections had been raised about his lack of training in Elizabethan literature:

> There has been some opposition to the formation of the Society; partly to myself, because I am unknown as a Shaksperean student. It is true that I am but a mere student, who knows nothing, and wants to know more. Am I to be blamed because I try to take the means I think best to that end?[9]

In the Furnivall Papers in King's College Library, London, is a notebook containing Furnivall's own comments and observations on the plays. Included are notes on sources, plot, characters, and so on, and his own reactions to various plays. For example, he notes that *King John* is "a fine play. Bathurst clearly wrong in putting it so late. Its strain of farce in Constance reminds me of Richard III."[10] Furnivall's excitement about Shakespeare is seen in a letter to Henry Bradshaw on July 17, 1875: "I do hope that you will come on to Shakspere. He does 'stain' Chaucer & everyone else that I've read."[11]

[8]Ibid., p. vi. Schoenbaum writes: "This sentimental and hallucinatory sketch in which the creator and his creations hopelessly merge, shows that Furnivall was no critic." *Shakespeare's Lives*, p. 484.

[9]*New Shakspere Society Transactions*, 1874, p. x.

[10]A reference to Charles Bathurst, *Remarks on the Differences in Shakespeare's Versification in Different Periods of His Life*.

[11]Cambridge University Library, Bradshaw Papers.

Furnivall's modesty about his qualifications as regards Shakespeare did not persuade him to give up his favorite spelling of the bard's name—*Shakspere*—and few members of the society dared use any other spelling. He claimed that all the signatures in existence read *Shakspere*, and admonished his fellow society members: . . . "though it has hitherto been too much to ask people to suppose that Shakspere knew how to spell his own name, I hope the demand may not prove too great for the imagination of the Members of the New Society."[12] For the last quarter of the nineteenth century the authoritative reading was Shakspere. In fact, the spelling on the will is Shakspeare, the spelling established in the second half of the eighteenth century by George Steevens and Edmund Malone. After several variations the modern usage was established by Collier's Shakespeare Society, which may account in part for Furnivall's dogged adherence to "Shakspere," a spelling that disappeared along with the New Shakspere Society in 1894. Nevertheless, Furnivall was in good company. In a letter from the British Museum to *Archaeologia* dated January 11, 1837, Sir Frederic Madden argues stoutly for the spelling that Furnivall claimed was the correct one.[13]

From the beginning Furnivall insisted that German scholarship was to form the basis and method of the society's work; for example, he wanted members to form reading parties and read Shakespeare chronologically at one another's houses and discuss the plays afterward with the help of Gervinus's and August von Schlegel's criticism. The *Saturday Review* reminded Furnivall in 1874 that

> caution is perhaps more needed here than in Germany; for English literary men are apt, like English men of science, to sit down in companies and to overrate the necessity of supporting the views of "authority." It may be all very well for Mr. Furnivall to inform us that Mr. Tennyson "tells" him that Fletcher's hand "work't out Shakspere's original conception" of *Henry VIII*. We are well aware that Mr. Tennyson is "the greatest living poet in England," but still we venture to ask, If Mr. Tennyson told Mr. Furnivall, who told Mr. Tennyson?[14]

[12]"Founder's Prospectus Revised," *New Shakspere Society Transactions*, 1874, p. 5. See Furnivall's *On Shakspere's Signatures*.

[13]Sir Frederic Madden, "Observations on an Autograph of Shakspere, and the Orthography of his Name," *Archaeologia* 27 (1838): 113–23.

[14]*Saturday Review* 37 (January, 1874):12. See "Founder's Prospectus," *New Shakspere Society Transactions*, 1874, Appendix, p. 8.

Tennyson was the first to be offered the position of honorary president of the society. He declined, and the post remained unoccupied until Robert Browning accepted it in 1879.[15] The list of sixty-six vice-presidents included the best-known English, German, and American scholars of the time, with a few distinguished men from other professions: Edward Dowden, Alexander Ellis, Horace H. Furness, Thomas H. Huxley, Henry Morley, Max Müller, Ruskin, Sir John Seeley, Skeat, Child, Hermann Ulrici, ten Brink, Nikolaus Delius, and others. Herbert Spencer was also asked to become a vice-president but declined and asked Furnivall not to send him further communications of this sort because he was too busy. His letter reads: "I am averse on principle to all titles that do not express functions; and among others, to such titles as that of vice-president, where this is merely honorary." He refers to invitations to join societies as "hindrances" and attaches to his letter his "lithographed" reply to all who seek him: "Mr. Herbert Spencer regrets that he must take measures for diminishing the amount of his correspondence."[16] Matthew Arnold also declined to be a vice-president,[17] and so did Charles Darwin: "Mr. C. Darwin presents his compliments to Mr. Furnivall & as he has never attended to the subject of the proposed Society, he does not wish for the honour of being one of the Vice-Presidents."[18]

By 1882 notable vice-presidents included George Macdonald, J. A. H. Murray, Richard Morris, and Henry Sweet, and the honorary secretary was Kenneth Grahame. Browning's position as president was, of course, a purely honorary one; the *Transactions* show that all the presiding that had to be done was regularly undertaken by Furnivall. On this subject Furnivall made his policy perfectly clear at the first meeting:

> With regard to the formation of the Society, . . . some people have complained that I have taken too much on myself in this matter. I can only say that I formed this Society in the same way that I formd all the other Societies I have founded; that is having a special work to get done, I askt people to come forward and help

[15] *New Shakspere Society Transactions*, 1879, p. xxxi.

[16] Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 822, December 9, 1873.

[17] Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 5, December 15, 1873.

[18] Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 257, December 6, 1873.

> to do it. I didn't ask people in general to come forward and tell me what to do, because I knew (more or less) what special things I wanted done. . . . From tonight I cease to be the sole Controller of the Society, as I have just handed it over, in full working order, to the Committee of Workers, who have so kindly associated themselves with me.[19]

The membership of the society at its opening was about 250, a figure that Furnivall wanted doubled by the end of the year. H. R. Steeves claims that at its maximum the society's membership never reached more than 300 or 400, but at its eighteenth meeting, on October 8, 1875, Furnivall congratulated the society on its membership of over 500.[20] This membership included libraries (such as the Shakespeare Memorial Library, Birmingham), institutions (such as Queen's College, Oxford), and branch societies (such as Owen's College, Manchester), which were a special feature of Furnivall's scheme of organization for this and later societies. Active interest in the society's work was to be sustained by regular meetings at which papers would be read and discussed, "the papers being shorter and the discussions much fuller than in other bodies." The proceedings of the meetings were to be carefully chronicled in the *Transactions* of the society, which would form the "First Series" of publications. The *Transactions* consist of four large volumes covering the years 1874 to 1886 and contain a wealth of information about the society in addition to papers on about every conceivable aspect of Shakespearean studies. Theories are put forward and argued, verbal elucidations are provided, sources are examined, historical questions are debated, and various sources of texts are edited. Throughout, Furnivall's recording of the society's activities is, as usual, meticulous and enthusiastic; for instance, he is obviously delighted to announce at the third meeting, on April 24, 1874, that H.R.H. Prince Leopold had consented to become a vice-president of the society[21] and, on November 13, that the prince had "expressed his intention of presenting to the society the Parallel-Text edition of the first two quartos of Romeo and Juliet," which was by

[19]*New Shakspere Society Transactions*, 1874, p. viii.

[20]*New Shakspere Society Transactions*, 1875, p. xvi.

[21]Ibid., p. xiv.

then in press.[22]

The society plunged itself into the machinery of German critical scholarship and labored with great enthusiasm to establish the order in which Shakespeare's plays were written. Malone's efforts to do this late in the eighteenth century were dismissed as inadequate. Now the solution lay in the new scientific method, which would produce statistics from metrical texts; analysis of the verse of each play would enable New Shakspere Society scholars and workers to determine the proportion of rhyme, run-on lines, double endings, and other metrical devices so that results could be tabulated and conclusions drawn on the theory that the more refined the versification, the later the play (in terms of chronological sequence). In his first report to the society Furnivall explains how, by using "metrical tests," the society would work out "a trial order of the production of Shakspere's works," apply "higher tests" to the order, and thereby reveal both the succession of the works and the growth of Shakespeare's mind and art. Furnivall then describes some of the society's publications that observe this principle. For example, the genuine parts of *Pericles* which Tennyson, as an undergraduate at Cambridge, had separated from the spurious and later read to Furnivall had also been identified by Frederick Gard Fleay by use of metrical tests and with a little help from aesthetic critics.[23] Fleay, who was given the job of settling the order of the plays by metrical tests, became one of the leading lights of the New Shakspere Society. As a Shakespearean scholar he was analytical almost to the point of being statistical, and much of his work was regarded as arbitrary and dogmatic, though he did some worthwhile research on English dramatic history. Like Furnivall, Fleay had an unlimited supply of energy—at Trinity College, Cambridge, he was

[22]Ibid., pp. xix–xx. The other series of the publications were to be divided, rather elaborately, into seven classes: Second Series, original quarto and folio texts of the plays; Third Series, originals and analogues of the plays; Fourth Series, Shakespeare allusion books; Fifth Series, selections from contemporary drama (no numbers were ever published); Sixth Series, works on Shakespeare's England; Seventh Series, mysteries, miracles, masks, interludes and comedies; Eighth Series, miscellanies, including specimens of Elizabethan and Jacobean handwriting and reprints of Shakespearean criticism.

[23]*New Shakspere Society Transactions*, 1875–6, Appendix, pp. 1–2. See David V. Erdman and Ephim G. Fogel, *Evidence for Authorship* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1966), pp. 463–64. See also "Who Wrote Shakespeare's Henry VIII?" *Gentleman's Magazine*, 137 (August, 1850): 115–23.

called "the industrious flea"—but his literary efforts frequently yielded misleading or wrong results. A. H. Bullen relates an anecdote illustrating the unreliability of Furnivall's chief statistician:

> . . . on one occasion, when I objected to some peculiarly far-fetched theory of his, he protested that it was not to be taken seriously but was "intended as a skit on the New Shakspere Society"; whereupon I reminded him of the fact (which he had forgotten) that he originally announced this theory in a school-edition of *King John* (when he was headmaster of Skipton Grammar School); and I mildly expostulated with him for mystifying schoolboys.[24]

Fleay gave most of the first papers at the society: "On Metrical Tests as Applied to Dramatic Poetry" (two parts), "On the Authorship of *The Taming of The Shrew*," "On the Authorship of *Timon of Athens*" (two parts), "On the Play of *Pericles*," and so on. His scientific-analytic methods are very much in evidence in these papers. In his first paper ("Metrical Tests Applied to Shakspere") he stresses the importance of the frequency of rhyming lines and the metrical test called "the unstopped-line" in determining the chronological arrangement of the plays. He claims:

> Our analysis, which has hitherto been qualitative, must become quantitative; we must cease to be empirical, and become scientific: in criticism as in other matters, the test that decides between science and empiricism, is this: "Can you say, not only of what kind, but how much? If you cannot weigh, measure, number your results, however you may be convinced yourself, you must not hope to convince others, or claim the position of an investigator; you are merely a guesser, a propounder of hypotheses."[25]

Metrical tables providing, for example, the number of lines with double endings, the number of rhyming lines, or the number of lines with more or less than five measures could serve two ends: if a writer has progressed in the "manipulation of his art" and has different characteristics in his work at different periods, the tables will help determine the chronological order of his works. By testing the individual

[24]Schoenbaum, *Shakespeare's Lives*, p. 486.

[25]*New Shakspere Society Transactions*, 1874, p. 2. Fleay was deeply interested in phonetic and spelling reform; see his *English Sounds and English Spelling* (London, 1878). In 1879 he joined the Spelling Reform Association and edited its journal.

characteristics or "manners" of the plays, the tables will help determine the genuineness of works traditionally assigned to the author.

Fleay gives an example of determining chronology by comparing *Love's Labour's Lost* and *The Winter's Tale*. In the former he finds over 1,000 rhyming lines in the dialogue; in the latter, none. In the former he finds only 7 lines with double endings; in the latter, 639. There are few incomplete lines in the former, while there are many in the latter. The conclusion is that Shakespeare gradually "dropped the rhymed dialogue, adopted double endings, Alexandrines and broken lines." As Fleay shows, however, if the last three tests are used alone, strange results will be obtained; for example, the table will show that double endings put *Richard III* very late and that the two parts of *Henry IV* are widely separated. Fleay concludes that "the rhyme test—and the rhyme test only of all that I have as of yet applied—is of use *per se* for determining the chronological arrangement of Shakspere's works."[26]

Fleay's analytic methods and conclusions were accepted by many members of the society. In fact, the society's confident attitude about the absolute settlement of questions encouraged some outsiders to suspect that conclusions were likely to be drawn before proof had been ascertained. This does not seem to have been the case, however, possibly because the members carefully discussed the papers after they had been delivered. Furnivall took a prominent part in these discussions and often read papers himself—and it would have been hard to fool scholars of such stature as Brinsley Nicholson, James Spedding, Sir Sidney Lee, and Dowden.[27]

Alexander Ellis, president of the Philological Society, had words of caution for Fleay's method, which Furnivall sums up as follows:

> Although outsiders might imagine that Mr. Fleay's numerical treatment of Shakspere was a poetical desecration, he foresaw that it gave a means, independent of mere subjective feeling, for separating the feet of clay from the heart of gold, so that we should not be idolizing as Shakspere's what he never wrote. . . . Still, much remained to be done. The work would have to be veri-

[26]*New Shakspere Society Transactions*, 1874, p. 7.

[27]George Bernard Shaw was a member and gave papers and speeches at the society's meetings. For example, on February 29, 1884, he read a paper on *Troilus and Cressida*. *Shakespeareana*, April, 1884, p. 180.

> fied. The actual rhymes relied upon must be each seen and passed, for what looks like rhyme to modern eyes was not always rhyme to Shakspere's ears, and conversely.[28]

Furnivall, who was never taken in by Fleay, refused to accept the rhyme test as conclusive. He writes:

> To suppose that any one empirical metrical test, like that of Rhyme, can settle the stage of development of a myriad-sided mind like Shakspere's is, to me, a notion never to be entertained. If, after close study, the results of any one such text are found to coincide all through with the results of aesthetic criticism, and external evidence, I shall hold it a happy accident, not a scientific necessity.

He goes on to test Fleay's "Table" and shows that the order of the plays resulting from it is "so flagrantly wrong . . . that the ryme-test must be held to have fail'd completely as a sole guide."[29] Meanwhile, personal relations between Furnivall and Fleay deteriorated to the point that they communicated with each other through a middleman (Edwin Abbot), and by September, 1874, Furnivall was calling Fleay "a lying sneak & cad. The shuffling, evasions, & effrontery of the man during the last 4 months are almost beyond belief."[30] Fleay resigned from the Society's committee in July, 1874, and he and Furnivall exchanged a series of letters in the *Academy* on the verse tests that each was carrying out. In a letter of September 19, Furnivall was particularly acrimonious about the pronunciation of "posthumous," which he claimed Fleay had got wrong. The editor of the *Academy* was eventually forced to announce that "we cannot receive any further letters on this subject."

There developed a strong tendency for scholars and critics to become preoccupied with scanning Shakespeare's meter not so much to appreciate the beauty of the rhythm as to produce a "scientific" device to gauge Shakespeare's growth as a poet. Furnivall, however,

[28]*New Shakspere Society Transactions*, 1874, p. 19.

[29]Ibid., pp. 32–34. In his first report to the society in July, 1875, Furnivall said, "Against the unwise attempt to make these tests the sole ones of the dates of the plays, as strong protests have been uttered in the Society's rooms and publications as have been heard outside." *New Shakspere Society Transactions*, 1874, Appendix, p. 3. See also pp. 19–20.

[30]William S. Peterson, *Browning's Trumpeter: The Correspondence of Robert Browning and Frederick J. Furnivall*, p. 166.

clearly had more faith in Tennyson's judgment than in any of Fleay's tests. After Fleay assigned a passage in *Timon of Athens* to another hand, Furnivall appealed to Tennyson, who proclaimed, "My dear Furnivall, I have no doubt that in spite of all the Fleas in England the page you speak of is Shakespeare."[31] Furnivall concluded happily: "A Tennyson, a Spedding, had no need of the aids that some of us beginners find most valuable. . . . this, then, shows that metrical tests must, in such questions, come second, not first. Heads must judge, then fingers may count."[32]

Metrical testing was one field of textual work in which Furnivall was particularly interested, and he was thoroughly at home in the analysis of metrical variations. That is not surprising, considering that, unlike aesthetic criticism, it was factual, mechanical, and pseudoscientific. Like Fleay, he had been trained in the sciences and mathematics,[33] and as a relative newcomer to the literary field he was apparently content to leave what he called "the higher criticism of style and thought" to Dowden and others who were qualified to deal with it.[34] As early as 1778, Edmond Malone had drawn attention to the value of rhyme tests, but it was not until the formation of the EETS that verse tests became a "science" in literary criticism. It was Furnivall himself who made the scientific analogy during an argument with his literary opponent Appleton Morgan, of the New York Shakespeare Society. On July 9, 1887, replying to one of Morgan's attacks, Furnivall wrote in the *Literary World* (Boston) that Shakespeare's works should be examined comparatively, "as the geologist treats the earth's crust, as the comparative anatomist treats

[31]Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 856, April 12, 1874. In December, 1874, Frederick Locker-Lampson wrote from the Isle of Wight, "I am much interested in what you & Mr. Tennyson think about Edward 3rd." Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 495.

[32]*New Shakspere Society Transactions*, 1874, p. 242.

[33]Swinburne called Furnivall "the champion of the arithmetical school."

[34]"At the meeting of 24 October (1890), Dr. Furnivall read a paper on 'A Lover's Complaint' in which he retracted the remarks he had made in the 'Leopold Shakespeare' [*sic*] as to the genuineness of this poem. He gave the reasons for his change of opinion, the chief of which were the line-endings and Shakespearian phrases. The other members agreed with him, but Mrs. Stopes objected, saying that beautiful phrases were a less sure test than the conception and pictorial imagination of the whole,—phrases could be cribbed; but she thought the fundamental conception and representation of 'The Lover's Complaint' un-Shakespearean in its entirety." "A Report on the New Shakspere Society from *Poet-Lore*," *Poet-Lore* 3 (1891):56.

the world. Look on Shakespeare's plays and poems as the product of a mind working in successive periods."

Predictably, Furnivall's work on metrical questions was always systematic and nearly always thorough; his first full statement of results derived from metrical tests is given in *The Succession of Shakspere's Works and the Use of Metrical Tests in Settling It, etc. Being the Introduction to Professor Gervinus' Commentaries Translated by Miss Bunnett* (1874). Nearly half of this work is devoted to the "change in Shakspere's metres as he advanct in life," to "Metrical Tests," and to "the spurious portions of plays called Shakspere's, and the use of metrical tests in detecting them."[35] Furnivall argued that Shakespeare began writing his verse with a heavy syllable at the end of each line but that this became monotonous and he began using prepositions and other small words at the end of the line and carrying the sentence through to the middle of the next line to vary the rhythm. As he altered his meter, his mind was developing; as he became more earnest and his subject matter became more profound, his structures changed accordingly. The order of his texts can thus be determined and a true chronology of his works established through a study of the occurrence of these run-on lines. Furnivall enthusiastically claimed:

> I worked it all out, and I had the most exciting fortnight of my life on discovering how the plays grew one into the other, like a hook and eye; the hook you found in one play, and the eye in the next one; for after thinking about one set of things, it was only natural that the poet should carry on the train of his thoughts into another play. I was in a state of exaltation all the time I was working on this, the biggest man I had ever come across.[36]

Under Furnivall's vigorous direction scholars and researchers pursued their given assignments, and the society's work moved rapidly ahead. In the summer of 1875, Furnivall could boast that

> It [the Society] had led the revival of interest in Shakspere that the theatres and press bear witness to; it has enrolld nearly 450 Members; it has establisht Branch Societies, and helpt to form many reading parties; it has forct on the

[35]Frederick James Furnivall, *The Succession of Shakspere's Works and the Use of Metrical Texts in Settling It . . .*, pp. xix–xx.

[36]*Great Thoughts from Master Minds*, 8:90 (1910).

> notice of the English public that most powerful and useful instrument in Shakspere criticism, "Metrical Tests"; it has procured the publication of a new and cheaper edition of the English *Gervinus.* Its members Mr. Halliwell and Prof. Dowden have publisht valuable works on Shakspere.[37]

These publications were of particular importance to Furnivall. Certain from the start that once the order of the plays had been established they would fall into a number of groups that correspond to various phases in Shakespeare's life, he made Halliwell-Phillipps responsible for the correlation of biographical data.[38] Gervinus and Delius had already named three such periods, but Furnivall favored Charles Bathurst's arrangement of four. The final decision lay with Dowden, whose assignment was to study the subject based on the more credible of Fleay's findings. When Dowden published his contribution in 1875 (*Shakspere: A Critical Study of His Mind and Art*), which showed that there *were* four distinct periods in Shakespeare's life, Furnivall's fondest hopes were confirmed. Dowden found that in his earlier plays the poet wrote "concerning young men and maidens, their loves, their mirths, their griefs, as one who is among them"—of Rosalind, for example, "a gallant curtle-axe upon her thigh, and the bright, tender, loyal womanhood within." Then after the patriotic phase of the histories and the bitter depths of tragedy, Shakespeare returned to the young men and maidens, not now as one of them but "tenderly bending over the joys and sorrows of youth" and creating heroines "made up of beauty, and love, and womanly pity."

The sentimental, romanticized view of Shakespeare and of his heroines found in Dowden and Furnivall was in part a reflection of the spirit of the age,[39] in part a development of the teaching of Coleridge, and in Furnivall a result of his idealized conception of girls and women first seen in the early days of the London Working Men's College. Furnivall, like Carlyle a disciple of German romantic criticism, tends to eulogize Shakespeare throughout. The national bard

[37]*New Shakspere Society Transactions*, 1875, Appendix, pp. 5-6.

[38]Halliwell-Phillipps's book was the first part of his *Illustrations of the Life of Shakespeare.* He risked Furnivall's wrath, but as a member of the original Shakespeare Society he claimed the right to retain their spelling.

[39]See Walter E. Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830-1870*, p. 387.

was above reproach, beyond all criticism. F. E. Halliday writes: "There was nothing left but to adore, and see who could shout the loudest. The floods of adulation were loosed, and the weighty water of romantic German professors augmented the torrent."[40]

Hero-worship was another nineteenth-century phenomenon. As Walter Houghton points out, "Even Macaulay, who lamented the propensity to 'Boswellism,' could imagine 'the breathless silence' in which we should listen to Milton's slightest word, 'the passionate veneration with which we should kneel to kiss his hand and weep upon it.' "[41] If Goethe was Carlyle's contemporary hero, Tennyson and Browning were Furnivall's heroes, and Chaucer and Shakespeare were his Great Men from England's noble past. Unable to accept the traditional beliefs of his father, Furnivall found inspiration in the lives and works of famous men, and like Carlyle and others he looked to these heroes to lead English society out of the industrial wasteland of his era.

Memorial addresses were given on the centenaries of great men's deaths, and in 1863 Furnivall was asking for celebrations to be arranged in New York[42] and a monument to be built in England to celebrate Shakespeare's three hundredth birthday. Ruskin's reaction to Furnivall's idea of a monument was not very encouraging. He writes on June 20, 1863: "My dear Furnivall, I wish you wouldn't be absurd. Do you think Shakespeare or anybody else will sleep the sounder because you build more bad Gothic somewhere, in everybody's way?—monument!—isn't this island and the race monuments enough—I won't have anything to do with it."[43]

Furnivall had introduced Ruskin to Frederic Harrison in 1860, and although Ruskin was no positivist, he did emphasize "the sight and history of noble persons" in a plan of education to develop "admiration, love, and hope." He stipulated that young people "shall learn . . . what had been beautifully and bravely done; and they shall know

[40]F. E. Halliday, *The Cult of Shakespeare*, p. 167.

[41]Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind*, p. 306.

[42]See Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 946, letter from Richard G. White, August 31, 1863.

[43]Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 780.

the lives of the heroes and heroines in truth and naturalness; and shall be taught to remember the greatest of them on the days of their birth and death."[44] Harrison gave lectures at the Working Men's College but found that the students were interested only in learning how to write decent English, "the strong horny hands, who have something to live for, are not given to literature, and have no taste for study at all."[45] In a letter Harrison wrote to Louisa Shore about the public lectures he decided to give on his own, there is an interesting example of Victorian hero-worship:

> I am sure you will find the subject—the character of Alfred—grow on you as it does on me. I am convinced his life is the most beautiful and the most romantic of any hero in history. He is the only *perfect* statesman and king, one who to consummate policy brought a religious heart and a spotless character. He unites everything that a great public leader ought to be or can be. He is Lycurgus, Hadrian, Hannibal, Godefroi, Jeanne Darc, St. Bernard, Lorenzo, Milton, and Cromwell all in one.[46]

As Harrison's enthusiastic description makes clear, the hero had to be of the highest character. One of the most important ingredients was "manliness." Furnivall, of course, laid great stress upon this particular quality, and on one occasion was quick to put down an attempt to question Shakespeare's manliness. In 1899, Samuel Butler, who was introduced to Furnivall ("a most amiable kindly old gentleman") at the British Museum, had tea with him at the A.B.C. teashop to discuss the riddle of Shakespeare's sonnets. After Butler had advanced his own theories, that the poems were inspired by Shakespeare's infatuation with Willie Hughes, a naval steward, Furnivall hotly denied that "there was anything in the sonnets to indicate that Shakespeare had been fonder of Mr. W. H. than he should have been." He admitted that he had not read Butler's book on the subject (*Shakespeare's Sonnets Reconsidered* 1899) but had only skimmed through it and that he had never studied the sonnet sequence closely.[47]

According to Leslie Stephen, John Stuart Mill lacked virility and needed to have "some red blood infused into his veins." On the other

[44]John Ruskin, *Works*, ed. E. T. Cook and A. D. O. Wedderburn, 27:143, 156–57.

[45]Frederic Harrison, *Autobiographic Memoirs*, 1:255.

[46]Ibid., 1:269.

[47]S. Schoenbaum, *Shakespeare's Lives*, p. 455.

hand, Henry Fielding and Samuel Johnson were men, and Thomas Macaulay was a "thoroughly manly writer" and properly proud of "the healthy vigorous stock from which he springs."[48] There could have been no doubt in Stephen's mind that Furnivall was healthy, vigorous, and aggressive. George Bernard Shaw once remarked that Furnivall was an agnostic because "he could not forgive Jesus for not putting up a fight in Gethsemane."[49]

The sentimental, popularized versions of Shakespeare's plays on the London stage were, of course, as symptomatic of the times as hero-worship. Henry Irving's *Hamlet* at the Lyceum was played as a tragedy of love, a romantic drama in which the King of Denmark's murder ruined the happiness of Hamlet and Ophelia. In his production of *Macbeth*, Irving reintroduced Sir William Davenant's flying witches, who sang while performing their aerial frolics. On one occasion Irving sent Furnivall stall tickets for a production of *Othello*, but, typically, Furnivall criticized the actor's elocution in his delivery of the line "Put out the light": "I told him he said them [the words] in a slovenly way, and the consequence was I got no more tickets for the stalls."[50] J. H. Wylie recalls another occasion on which Furnivall criticized Irving: "He [Furnivall] made me wince badly when I heard him let out against Henry Irving at the Guildhall School of Music, but he seems to have had a grudge against him for mutilating the text of Shakespeare, and he could not hold his tongue even when the man was lying dead."[51]

To emphasize the continuity of Shakespeare's work, Furnivall (and later Munro with him)[52] showed the links between the plays. Some of these links are significant, but others are arbitrary and superficial. For example, there is a significant link between *The Comedy of Errors* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in that all the woods scenes in *Dream* are a comedy of errors and that in these two plays and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* the power of love over man's oaths is shown, the

[48]Leslie Stephen, *Hours in a Library*, 2:374–76.

[49]George Bernard Shaw, *Sixteen Self Sketches*, p. 95.

[50]John Munro, *Frederick James Furnivall: A Volume of Personal Memoir*, p. 20.

[51]Ibid., p. 203; see also pp. 59–60.

[52]See Frederick James Furnivall, ed., *The Century Shakspere.*

prevailing subject being the fickleness of love. Of the links noted by Furnivall that are less significant are the following: in *King John* the army is lost in the Wash, and in *The Merchant of Venice* ships are wrecked on the Goodwin Sands; the same adventurous spirit is found in both Petruchio and Bassanio; and both Bianca and Portia have rival wooers. Furnivall tended to get hamstrung by his own system as he overworked it.

Elsewhere the positive nature of Furnivall's critical approach defies a sensitive, aesthetic criticism of the plays, and the moral side of Shakespeare's genius becomes almost an obsession. To Furnivall, Shakespeare the man is one with Shakespeare the artist, and the beauty of his character and his writings are indissolubly bound up. Shakespeare preached his own morals in his history plays. He revered women, and the result was his incomparable gallery of portraits of women. Of this kind of critical attitude Augustus Ralli writes, "That there lies in the human deeps a more precious metal than the gold and silver of morals—an aesthetic radium—seemed unknown to all mid-Victorian critics except [Walter] Pater."[53]

Evidence of the sentimental and exclamatory school of criticism is seen in the publications of the New Shakspere Society. The *Transactions* for 1875 supplies, apart from Shakespearean statistics, a fascinating catalogue of "Beauties, Gems, and Keepsakes": Dodd's *Beauties of Shakespeare; Religious and Moral Sentiments* ("Gems Gathered by G"); *Shakspere Daily Gem Book*; and *Cupid's Birthday Book: One Thousand Lovedarts from Shakspere.* If to all this is added Mrs. Cowden Clarke's idolization of Shakespeare's women in *The Girlhood of Shakspere's Heroines*, Swinburne's similar treatment of *Cymbeline*, and the anonymous *Shakspere's Garden of Girls*, it is not too surprising that Dowden and Furnivall were able to extract from Fleay's computer criticism large amounts of Victorian sentiment.

Throughout, Furnivall's criticism of Shakespeare oscillates between scientific analysis and romantic extravagance. The aesthetic quality of the plays is smothered by the exact analysis of verse on the one hand and positive criticism with its elements of wonder and reverence on the other. In his various "Introductions" Furnivall's attention is rooted in matters that could be counted and generalized mathemat-

[53]Augustus Ralli, *A History of Shakespearian Criticism*, 1:497.

ically, and he is prone to accumulate a mass of historical, biographical, or textual detail of slight significance and regard the accumulation as an end. "A handful of facts are expanded into a thousand pages," the complaint of some of his Chaucer critics, certainly applies here. Also, the tendency to categorize and subdivide is seen again as the minute divisions of the botanist are applied (as Fleay recommended) to the critical study of Shakespeare. For example, in addition to the dozen or so verse styles that Furnivall claimed Shakespeare used (the light ending, run-on lines, five-measure dialogue, and so on), he also conjured up such periods of Shakespeare as the "Sunny-or-Sweet Time Group" (*Twelfth Night, Much Ado About Nothing, As You Like It*), the "Lust-or-False-Love Group" (*Troilus and Cressida, Antony and Cleopatra*), and the "Ingratitude-and-Cursing Group" (*King Lear, Timon of Athens, Coriolanus*). It is not very surprising that Appleton Morgan, Furnivall's literary opponent in the United States, proceeded to suggest further groups, as "Danger-of-Leaving-Your-Wife-to-Entertain-Strangers Group" in which he placed *The Rape of Lucrece*.

Of course, Furnivall's approach was not unique or unusual during a period in which a romantic individualist like Swinburne was contemporary with a rigorous scientist like Fleay and a factual Gervinus could succeed a thoroughgoing romanticist like Schlegel. Considering the amount of scholarly activity in this field, much of which was inspired by the work of the New Shakspere Society, and the different, almost contrary approaches that criticism took, it is no wonder that a collision of critics eventually occurred.

The row involved Furnivall, Swinburne, and Halliwell-Phillipps, and was conducted in terms that shocked scholars both at home and abroad. Most of Furnivall's friends have discreetly ignored the affair in their tributes to him, but since it was probably the principal reason for the demise of the New Shakspere Society, the main events are worth recording. Furnivall himself would have insisted on a faithful record; he once said to Beatrice Harraden, who wanted him to write his autobiography: "If I wrote it, I should have to write a truthful one and put in all the things I was ashamed of; and I do not think I should like doing that. But at the same time, I should not like to leave 'em out."[54]

[54]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. 72. For the best accounts of the Swinburne affair, see Oscar Maurer, "Swinburne vs. Furnivall," *University of Texas Studies in English* 31 (1952): 86–96; Peterson, *Browning's Trumpeter*, pp. 165–92.

Furnivall's management of the New Shakspere Society first came under attack in 1876, when John Jeremiah, of the Urban Club, anonymously published *Furnivallos Furioso and "the Newest Shakespeare Society": A Dram-attic Squib of the Period in Three Fizzes.*[55] This hard-hitting rhymed sketch was apparently provoked by Furnivall's rejection (no doubt in rough terms) of certain papers on Shakespeare submitted to him by a certain gentleman. The dramatis personae include "Furnivallos, surnamed Furioso, a great Critic and founder of the 'Newest Shakespeare Society.' Dixonus, Reviewer and Author in General. A great Admirer of—Himself, 'with scarce time to steal from Spiritual.' Carlylus, an aged Philosopher of the Anglo-Saxon-and-Water-School. General Members and Ass-ociates of the Society."

Furnivall himself comes under fire, but the burden of the attack is on the "unerring" metrical tests:

> Furnivallos: A YEAR or two ago, and I
> Had hardly read a line of Shakespeare's works—
> Or so-call'd works. For Why?
> Have I not found them, in such transient time,
> A nest of fledglings, and of mixed rhyme
> Without much reason—Heav'n save the mark—
> Cribb'd from Boccaccio's self or Chaucer's pages dark?
> A thought occurs—it is not always so,
> Since my poor brains are like my means, too low;
> And when I want them sharp, alas! they're slow!
> I'll found a fresh Society, Call'd "New,"
> And try if I can't, by much reading hard,
> Impart "new readings" to th' "Immortal Bard."[56]

Throughout, Furnivall is made to disparage Shakespeare and to assign his plays to other dramatists:

> Tupperius [Fleay]: Well, Friends, I thank you for this welcome praise,
> And now will quick unfold to your clear gaze
> Our Chairman's plan to test what Shakespeare wrote,
> And show how little's *his* which people quote.

[55]John Jeremiah, *Furnivallos Furioso and "the Newest Shakespeare Society," a Dram-attic Squib of the Period in Three Fizzes* . . . . Jeremiah also published *An Aid to Shakespeare* and *Notes on Shakespeare and a History of the Urban Club.*

[56]Jeremiah, *Furnivallos Furioso*, pp. 5–14.

> By this small Foot-rule, measuring each Line,
> We come at length to true Tests, numb'ring nine—
> The Strong, the Weak, the Heavy, and the Light,
> The Middle, Muddle, Dull-style, and the Bright . . . .[57]

The "Swinburne affair" began in the same year, 1876, when Swinburne, an almost exclusively aesthetic Shakespearean critic who preferred his own ear to the "five fingers" of Furnivall and Fleay, tried to show that Shakespeare was the sole author of *Henry VIII.* His paper on the subject was almost certainly in deliberate opposition to what he regarded as the mechanical methods of German scholarship championed by the New Shakspere Society, and in particular to Spedding's critical judgment of metrical questions in his article on *Henry VIII* in the *Gentleman's Magazine* referred to above.[58] Furnivall replied to Swinburne's arbitrary statements in a mildly worded letter to the *Academy*, providing proof of Swinburne's erroneous pronouncements.[59] Swinburne answered Furnivall's criticism with little grace, but in the face of exact evidence he was forced to let the matter rest, at least for the time being. Later, however, he gave vent to his loathing and contempt for the New Shakspere Society in two scathing parodies of the learned investigations of the society, making fun of the use of metrical and related tests and what he characterized as reckless manipulation of internal evidence.[60] Both papers were reprinted in the appendix to his *Study of Shakespeare*, published in 1880.

Early in 1877, Furnivall took a swipe at Swinburne in a letter pointing out William Minto's errors in his encyclopedia article on Chaucer. Swinburne had referred to *The Court of Love* as Chaucer's work. Commenting on this mistake, repeated by Minto, Furnivall wrote: "If Mr. Swinburne will maintain . . . that the 'Court of Love' is a fourteenth century poem, and Chaucer's I undertake to throw him

[57]Ibid., p. 14. Various facetious reviews from the *Pall Mall Palaverer*, etc. are printed on the paper covers of *Furnivallos Furioso*.

[58]James Spedding, "Who Wrote Shakspere's *Henry VIII*?" *Gentlemen's Magazine*, August, 1850, pp. 115–23. Reprinted in *New Shakspere Society Transactions*, 1874, Appendix.

[59]*Academy* 4 (January, 1876): 34–35.

[60]"Report of the First Anniversary Meeting of the Newest Shakespeare Society (April 1, 1876)," *Examiner*, April 1, 1876; "The Newest Shakespeare Society: Additions and Corrections," *Examiner*, April 15, 1876.

as heavily as I threw him when he said, and repeated, there were no final triple endings in the Fletcher part of 'Henry VIII.' "[61] Swinburne was furious. In a letter to the *Athenaeum* dated February 24, 1877, he disavows all intention of contending with "the erudite and warlike founder of the New-Shakespearean dynasty of dunces mainly or chiefly of churls—on the especial eminence from which he now crows and claps his wings with more than all the clamorous confidence of the most bellicose bantam-cock that ever defied creation."[62]

In 1879 the row was intensified when, in a *Note on the Historical Play of King Edward III*, Swinburne once again ridiculed the "New Shakespearean synagogue" and its "New Shakespeare," claiming that no understanding of Elizabethan poetry was to be found in that body of sham Shakespeareans. After denouncing the German school of Shakespearean criticism and exposing in some detail Schlegel's critical "misadventures," Swinburne writes:

> These are matters of such obsolete notoriety to all students, that the very recapitulation of the facts would be an impertinence in a time which had not shown itself tolerant of such illimitable ignorance and such incalculable impudence as may find vent in the duncery and quackery of a Sham Shakespeare Society. And as long as English dunces are found ready to accept and to circulate as critical gold the current brass of German pedants, so long will it be worthwhile to exhibit in the indecorous nakedness of their undraped absurdity the presumptions and assumptions of the least incompetent lecturers in that foreign school.

Swinburne later refers to the "Parnassian pedagogues" who count with their fingers and to the "brazen-browed and brazen-throated gang of dunces assembling at the presidential bray of a professional proficient in the Early English dialect of Billingsgate Market."[63] He then proceeds to pronounce (incorrectly) on certain questions of Shakespearean diction.

Furnivall, by then in full cry, gave a stinging answer to his assailant in the *Spectator* of September 6 and 13, 1879:

[61] C. K. Hyder, *Swinburne's Literary Career and Fame*, p. 188.

[62] *Athenaeum*, February 24, 1877, p. 257.

[63] *Gentlemen's Magazine*, August, 1879, pp. 170–71; September, 1879, pp. 330–49. See also *Gentlemen's Magazine*, October, 1879, pp. 506–507.

> I found that Mr. Swinburne had "conveyed" the *First Part of King Henry IV, Coriolanus*, and *Cymbeline* from Shakspere, as well as the *Tempest, King John, Richard III, Venus and Adonis*, and *Lucrece*. This is what Mr. Swinburne calls genuine Shakspere criticism, as opposed to the "sham" stuff that he, in such choice billingsgate denounces. If he will but write another like article or two, he will come to the result that Shakspere never wrote any plays or poems at all.[64]

Furnivall took up these and other specific points made by Swinburne in voluble and abusive riposte. Armed with foolproof evidence of quotation and reference, he virtually annihilated Swinburne's argument and attacked his pose as a critic whose intuitive faculties were superior to the systematic analysis of the "Newest Shakespeare" School. Furnivall told Swinburne "to teach his grandmother to suck eggs" and informed him that his ear was "a poetaster's, hairy, thick and dull." At the same time he bombarded the poet's friends with rude, insolent, and even libelous postcards about him. He accused Swinburne of "shallow ignorance," using his Anglo-Saxon to dub him "Pigsbrook" (Swin = pig; burne = brook), and, as Aldis Wright commented, acted "like an angry monkey." Swinburne then dubbed Furnivall "brothel-dyke" (from the Latin *fornix* and *vallum*), and the recriminations continued.[65] In reply to an appeal by Furnivall, Leslie Stephen wrote on September 7, 1879: "I cannot, I fear, be of any use in repelling Swinburne's insolence (I have not seen his articles by the way), as I have really no organ for the purpose. I have no connection with the Pall Mall & have written nothing in it for years."[66]

Even Edmund Gosse, who has nothing good to say about Furnivall in his biography of Swinburne, concedes that, despite Furnivall's outrageous behavior, Swinburne was not blameless:

> When Furnivall began to be rude, Swinburne should have withdrawn severely from the controversy. Instead of doing that, he exercised his ingenuity in infuriating his antagonist. He had a diabolical cleverness in tormenting Furnivall, and he knew how to hint the exact charge which would excite that unfortunate man to frenzy. Swinburne would ask his friends, as I well

[64]Frederick James Furnivall, *Mr. Swinburne's "Flat Burglary" on Shakspere*, p. 3.

[65]See Edmund Gosse and Thomas J. Wise, eds., *The Letters of Algernon Charles Swinburne*, 2:3ff.

[66]Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 830.

> remember, whether such "a flagellant note"—which he would read in manuscript to us, spluttering with ecstasy as he did so—would not make "Dunce Furnivall dance till the sweat pours down his cheeks"?[67]

Swinburne also composed verses for distribution among his friends in which he satirized Furnivall and the society as "Fartiwell & Co." and the "Shitspeare Society."[68] The *Westminster Review*, writing on Swinburne's *Study of Shakespeare*, asks:

> Is this all you have learnt out of Shakespeare—to revile one another like a parcel of fish-fags? Milton was of opinion that the object of reading and study was to improve our moral conduct; but the object of studying Shakespeare would seem to deteriorate it. Shakespearians are very like religious people. In their zeal for their god they forget all his commandments.[69]

The *Edward III* row provides a good example of Swinburne's rashness and carelessness. He comments intelligently on the style and versification of the play but then proceeds to challenge Furnivall on his own ground, claiming that certain words and uses of words in *Edward III* do not appear in the Shakespeare canon. Furnivall clearly enjoys producing the factual evidence that the words *do* appear in many acknowledged plays.[70] Also, about this time Swinburne chose to describe one of Furnivall's earlier attacks as "the tipsy and clumsy flourish of a belated clown's incapable quarter staff." Furnivall was able to retort that *tipsy* was "surely an unfortunate epithet for Mr. Swinburne to use to a forty years tee totaller." Swinburne's own excessive drinking was well known.

When Swinburne's *Study of Shakespeare*[71] came out in 1880, Dowden reviewed it very harshly in the *Academy* and attacked in particular Swinburne's stubborn insistence that Shakespeare was

[67]Edmund Gosse, *Algernon Charles Swinburne*, pp. 250–51.

[68]See Peterson, *Browning's Trumpeter*, p. 167.

[69]*Westminster Review* 113 (April, 1880):615.

[70]Hyder comments: "Though destitute of neither the instincts nor the erudition of the scholar, Swinburne was perhaps so over-sensitive to this confusion that he fell into the error of trespassing on the province of scientific method." Hyder, *Swinburne's Literary Career and Fame*, p. 186.

[71]The book was elaborated from two articles, "The Three Stages of Shakespeare," published in *Fortnightly Review* in 1875 and 1876, the two articles that furnished Furnivall with his first ammunition.

the sole author of *Henry VIII*. He also referred to the matter of Shakespearean words in *Edward III* in the following ironic manner:

> Mr. Swinburne was wrong on the poor point of fact, on which any pedant may be right, but in the higher "swooning sphere" where knowledge disappears in an excess of poetic sensibility, he is, and always has been right. Perhaps it may be permitted one to smile very gently.[72]

Both Swinburne and Furnivall wrote letters about the review, and in the July 10, 1880, issue of the *Academy*, Furnivall supplied damaging evidence of Swinburne's fatuous arguments. Dowden replied to Swinburne's letter:

> The general question which chiefly interests me in this whole discussion is the following: Does not accurate scholarship subserve the best criticism of literature and art? Or are we to wander in dilettantism, from one unfounded assumption to another, lit by will-o'-the-wisp fancies, until we suddenly find ourselves in the slough?[73]

At this point Halliwell-Phillipps joined the fight. While preparing his appendix containing the articles critical of the New Shakspere Society, Swinburne decided to dedicate the publication to Halliwell, who accepted the compliment. Halliwell's motive is hard to explain, since until then he had been a quiet, inactive member of the society. It is possible that he was secretly pleased of the chance to take a shot at Furnivall, whose new Shakespearean scholarship had overshadowed that of his own day, or he may simply have been flattered by Swinburne's dubious overture.[74] In any event, Furnivall was outraged:

> I at once wrote to Mr. Hell.-P., saying with what astonishment I had heard that he, affecting then to be my friend, had agreed to let these insolent Reprints, etc be dedicated to him. I pointed out to him that, as the character of the Pigsbrook Articles was known to him, and all of the Shakspere set, his acceptance of the dedication of them would be a deliberate adoption by him of the insults in the articles; and I told him that if his name appeared before the book, it would stop all relations between him and me; I would cut him

[72] *Academy*, January 3, 1880, p. 1.

[73] *Academy*, January 17, 1880, p. 49.

[74] On the other hand, as Gosse points out, Halliwell-Phillipps assisted Swinburne's Shakespeare studies by providing materials. See Gosse, *Algernon Charles Swinburne*, p. 249.

> dead; and that if he thus adopted and offered insults to my friends and me, he would find it a game which two could play at.[75]

Halliwell-Phillipps tried to deny responsibility for the book's contents, but Furnivall repeated his threat. The volume came out, with the dedication to Halliwell.

Furnivall retaliated with sneers at the various members of the "firm of Pigsbrook & Co." (Halliwell and Swinburne) in the Forewords to the facsimile of the second quarto of *Hamlet*, dedicated to William E. Gladstone, and called "what they pleased to call their opinions" nothing but "porcine vagaries." At this, Halliwell complained first to the society, which denied responsibility, then to Browning, the society's president, about such "coarse and impertinent language."

In the meantime, Edmund Gosse appealed to Dowden to intervene in the row and deal with Furnivall's misrepresentation of the society. Gosse wrote:

> On the only occasion on which I met Mr. Furnivall he spoke of you alone, among all the many persons he spoke of, with any tolerance or respect. I therefore suppose you have some influence with him, and it occurs to me to ask you to do your best to prevent the recurrence of this shocking scandal.[76]

He received the following reply, dated October 15, 1879, from Dublin:

> I still find it hard not to suppose that a large element of Rabelaisian jest enters into the affair. . . . It was, and almost is, inconceivable to me that any two—not men of letters—not gentlemen—but sane human beings could seriously enter on an angry discussion as to the length, breadth, thickness and hairiness of their respective ears. . . . Few persons can care more for the best part of Swinburne's work than I do. . . . For Furnivall I have a strong personal friendship. I know how indiscreet he can be. How recklessly he deals about his words. Yet, believe me, he is a good man. When a young man he flung himself into good and generous work, with Maurice and his band, taught and worked

[75]Frederick James Furnivall, *The "Co." of Pigsbrook & Co.*, p. 2. Furnivall's pun on Swinburne's name, used throughout the row, is explained by him on p. 1. Swinburne also dubbed Furnivall "Brothelsbank Flunkivall." In a letter to A. B. Grosart he described Furnivall as a "brothel lacky" and "bastard of Thersites." During the year Furnivall was satirized in *Punch* after William Poel produced *Hamlet* at St. George's Hall on April 16; Furnivall had helped Poel with the text. See *Punch*, April 30, 1881, p. 196.

[76]E. Dowden and H. Dowden, eds. *Edward Dowden's Letters*, pp. 138–39.

among the poor, gave a helping hand to those that needed it. And surely we owe profound gratitude to the man who has started and sustained in a disinterested spirit, at the loss of all material advancement in life, more work in the field of our early literature than any man ever did. If allowances are to be made for Swinburne, surely they are also for Furnivall, whose Atlantean weight of work may not always tend to calmness. The fact that he was a vegetarian for twenty or thirty years, and has always been a total abstainer belongs to a temperament in its way altogether as unusual as—possibly even Swinburne's. I take him not as he shows now and again, but in the long run—and how vast and how valuable is his work. If I thought it would do any good I should be quite willing to urge Furnivall to drop all personalities, and discuss literary questions in a literary spirit.

Dowden writes as a postscript:

I ought to add perhaps that as to the matters of fact in dispute, to which Swinburne attached considerable importance, I am sure that Furnivall is right. I could not understand how Swinburne made such extraordinary slips.[77]

Gosse replied to this letter on October 27, 1879:

The affair about which I wrote is already a thing of the past. Swinburne has promised to say no more: and this is perhaps as well, for Furnivall, in a very characteristic reply to my letter, informed me that next time he should have recourse to the horse-whip, which resolves the whole dispute into an absurdity.[78]

The affair was not "a thing of the past." Halliwell wanted a retraction from Furnivall, whose position as director of the society was shown on the title page of the facsimile quarto of *Hamlet* and who advertised the volumes as appearing "with the approval of the Committee of the N. Sh. S." Not surprisingly, Browning did not get involved in the matter, pointing out that his connection with the society was an honorary one and that he had not yet attended any of its meetings. He simply asked that the "spirit of gentle Shakespeare" prevail in the New Shakspere Society and added, "I know nothing whatever of any function belonging to the figurehead of the ship except to face the salt-water." Halliwell then wrote Browning another

[77]British Library, Ashley "A" MS 4149, fols. 148-53.

[78]Dowden and Dowden, eds., *Edward Dowden's Letters*, p. 143.

letter in which he attacked the society's management, in particular its director, and then published the correspondence. He refers in the correspondence to Furnivall's attack as "a resuscitation of the coarseness of Swift without his humour" and adds, "Only fancy the editor of one newspaper accusing the editor of another of writing his leaders with the prongs of a dung-fork inked in a pigs-brook!" Another paragraph reads:

> There is no harm in anyone forming a book-club, calling it a Society, making himself the Director and coaxing Prince Leopold and other distinguished personages to support his position by joining the most wonderful list of Vice-Presidents ever seen outside the announcement of a cottage-garden-flower show.[79]

It was at this point that Furnivall published *The "Co." of Pigsbrook & Co.,* perhaps the most offensive piece of the whole affair, in which he refers to the Halliwell-Browning correspondence:

> How much more manly it would have been in him to stand up and fight his own battle than to go whining to our President, like a little sneak at school, "Please, Sir, Furnivall's been rappin' my knuckles. I never done nothin' to him. You punish him."[80]

He adds:

> Mr. Hell-P. wrote a weak and washy allegory to show how superior he and his fellow amateur *labourers* were, as tenders of Shakspere's trees, to us who strive to be not only gardeners but scientific botanists. And when I saw the worthy Labourer, dung-fork in hand. . . I could not help smiling. . . . What he ought to do now is clear; dissolve partnership with Pigsbrook, apologise to us all round, send the Society a cheque for £250 to pay for a Reprint, buy an English Grammar, and then I'll let him off turning teetotaller.[81]

The Browning correspondence encouraged the *Athenaeum* to come out in Halliwell's support. Its view was that "the Committee ought at least to express its disapprobation" of Furnivall's "flowers of rhetoric" and that it was "hopeless for them [the committee] to deny responsi-

[79]*Copy of Correspondence [between J. O. H-P and Robert Browning Concerning Expressions Respecting Halliwell-Phillipps Used by F. J. Furnivall]*, p. 6.

[80]Furnivall, *The "Co." of Pigsbrook & Co.*, p. 3.

[81]Ibid., pp. 4-6.

bility for the preface in which Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps was wantonly insulted."[82] After several attempts to censure the director failed, because the committee refused to interfere, a number of members withdrew from the society in anger or embarrassment, and Skeat, Alexander Grosart, Aldis Wright, Ulrici, Delius, Karl Elze, and Heinrich Leo resigned their honorary vice-presidencies,[83] their places being taken by Sweet, Murray, and Paul Meyer, of the Collège de France.[84] Spedding probably best expressed the feelings of those who disapproved of Furnivall's conduct (and they included J. W. Hales, Henry Morley, and Leslie Stephen) when he wrote shortly before his death: "If the Society has no organisation capable of putting a stop to the use of such language by its Director, it is not a society to which a gentleman can belong."[85] Needless to say, Furnivall had the last word. In an open letter he blasted those members of the society (including Lord Devonshire) who had chosen to resign:

> I have received your note, and have struck your names out of the Society's List. . . . "the duty" of the New Shakspere Society is to mind its own business that is, to study Shakspere. . . . I regard as an impertinence your intrusion of yourselves into a dispute declared by me to be private between Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps, and myself, and I am now glad to be rid of you, whose return for the faithful work I have given you (and others) is this present censorious caballing against me.[86]

One member relented and decided to rejoin the society. On May 20, 1881, R. H. Collins wrote to Furnivall on behalf of "Prince Leopold II, King of the Belgians":

> Prince Leopold desires me to say that he will withdraw his resignation & I am to add that he is indeed to do so because he feels that he may rely on your not again attracting attention by the warmth of your controversial language,

[82]See *Athenaeum*, February 5, 1881, p. 201; February 26, 1881, p. 301; March 19, 1881, p. 397; March 26, 1881, p. 429; April 2, 1881, p. 461.

[83]A rumor circulated that Browning remained a vice-president only because the Browning Society was being formed.

[84]*Athenaeum*, March 12, 1881, p. 367; April 16, 1881, p. 525.

[85]*Athenaeum*, March 26, 1881, p. 429.

[86]Frederick James Furnivall, *To the Trinity and Other Withdrawers from the New Shakspere Society.* "The last echo of this unhappy business was a reprint by Halliwell-Phillipps of a letter by Furnivall, printed in the *Stratford-on-Avon Herald*, November 8, 1888. Ten copies were made for private circulation." Munro, *Furnivall*, p. lix.

while he on his part would be sorry to be the indirect cause of interrupting your Shaksperean work.[87]

C. K. Hyder writes:

> Many years later, Swinburne went to the British Museum in order to consult a rare book. He and his companions passed a venerable, distinguished-looking person, who lifted his head with a keen glance. When Swinburne was later told that the man he had seen was his former antagonist, Dr. Furnivall, he exclaimed, with no ill-humour, "Tiens! Was that the dog?" The long "flyting" had become only a memory—perhaps an old man's dreams[88]

Gosse concludes his account of the affair with what is doubtless an accurate statement: "His [Furnivall's] behaviour . . . was that of a man demented, though we may conjecture that he was not quite so angry as it amused him to pretend to be."[89]

It is almost certain that this unpleasant affair brought about the decline and eventual collapse of the New Shakspere Society. From 1882 on, publications (excluding the *Transactions*) became fewer and fewer, and in 1886 they stopped. Furnivall's eight volumes of "Old-Spelling Shakspere" advertised from 1883 to 1886 as "in the press," never appeared, and that was the fate of a dozen or so other volumes the society had in preparation. The last paper recorded in the *Transactions* was for July 19, 1892, and in that year Furnivall announced the society's last publication, a reprint of *Robert Laneham's Letter* from the plates of his edition of *Captain Cox's Ballads* for the Ballad Society in 1871, to be published in that form because, he explained, "the falling off in the subscriptions to the New Shakspere Society makes it needful that a cheap reprint shall be provided for the issue of 1887" (then five years delayed).[90] At the same time (July, 1892), *Shakespeareana* had this to say:

> We learn with pleasure that the New Shakspere Society of London will resume its publications, discontinued at the date of the Pigsbrook & Co. episode, when Director Furnivall capsized the entire establishment. . . . If the Society will keep a weather eye on Furnivall: take care that he separate his

[87]Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 493.

[88]Hyder, *Swinburne's Literary Career and Fame*, p. 191.

[89]Gosse, *Algernon Charles Swinburne*, p. 250.

[90]*Jahrbuch des deutschen Shakespeare Gesellschaft* 27 (1892): 249.

> private quarrels, opinions, vacation trips and domestic matters from his Shakespearian researches: correct his spelling and touch up his "copy," to something like the dignity of the field it proposes to occupy—all will be plain sailing this time.[91]

The New Shakspere Society was not heard from again. F. E. Halliday records its passing:

> In 1886 the Baconian Society was founded. A few years later the New Shakspere Society was disbanded. Halliwell-Phillipps was dead; Furnivall, having systematised Shakspere, felt that Shelley and Browning were in need of similar scientific study and Societies, Dowden, that their minds and arts were in need of appraisal, and Fleay, metrical tests exhausted, dedicated his talents to Egyptology and Assyriology. The cause of Shakepeare was left to the Germans and the Shakespeare-Gesellschaft.[92]

One offshoot of the New Shakspere Society was the Sunday Shakspere Society, established on October 18, 1874. In July of that year Furnivall took a large party from the National Sunday League (with whom he had flirted in London Working Men's College days) to Stratford-upon-Avon, where in the assembly rooms of the Golden Lion he addressed them on "Shakspere: The Progress of His Mind and Art." During this visit, which is reminiscent of outings from Great Ormond Street, the group visited various places of interest (except New Place, which Halliwell-Phillipps promptly closed to the party), and at an informal conference on the old Avon Bridge, formed the Society.[93] Furnivall was its president until his death. The scene in Stratford was described in typical terms by Furnivall in the *Advocate* for October, 1874:

> The bright sun above us, the stir of the elms, had reminded us of the gladness of the boyhood the poet had spent; the still church stones, the Avon's quiet flow, its level meads, the gathering evening shade, had made us think of

[91] *Shakespeareana: A Critical and Contemporary Review of Shakespearean Literature, Conducted by the Shakespeare Society of New York* IX (1892):185-86.

[92] Halliday, *The Cult of Shakespeare*, p. 170. On the Bacon-Shakespeare controversy Furnivall had this to say: "The Baconian theory has always been simple idiocy. It is too silly for words. You might just as well say that Gladstone wrote the works of Charles Dickens." *Great Thoughts from Master Minds*, 8:90.

[93] Munro, *Furnivall*, pp. lix-lx. In 1891 the curator of Shakespeare's house at Stratford was Joseph Skipsey, the local coal miner-poet. He got the post through Furnivall's influence after William Rossetti recommended him.

> Shakspere's peaceful Stratford wherein he closed his days. Were these a type of his works? Did they too begin with playfulness and fun; did they too end in content and peace?[94]

This visit was, of course, a Victorian "pilgrimage," a term that "underscores the link between the decline of religious, and the rise of hero, worship." Frederic Harrison describes these pilgrimages as follows:

> One of the most popular forms of commemoration which we instituted was that of a pilgrimage to the home, or tomb, and associations of great men, and visits to scenes of historical interest. The most elaborate of these were visits to Stratford-on-Avon and its neighbourhood, to Oxford, Cambridge, and Huntingdon, to Paris, Winchester, and Canterbury. . . . In every case, the design was . . . to give a serious tone and that religious consecration which benefits a genuine pilgrimage by filling our minds with reverence for the immortal spirit whose footsteps we were seeking to trace.[95]

Despite the attacks of Swinburne, Halliwell-Phillipps, and others, the New Shakspere Society's contribution to English studies was far from insignificant. Halliday concedes that, although, for Furnivall, "Shakespeare was merely another natural phenomenon, the heart of whose mystery could be plucked out by Victorian science along with other secrets of nature,"[96] he and his well-disciplined team of workers did a great deal for the study and appreciation of Shakespeare. By 1886 the New Shakspere Society had issued thirty numbers of its publications, not counting the *Transactions*; these numbers included the Second Series, a good start for the planned quarto and folio reprints, including separate and parallel reprints and revised reprints of *Romeo and Juliet, Henry V,* and further editions of *The Two Noble Kinsmen* and *Cymbeline*. Only one volume appeared in the Third Series, Arthur Brooke's *Tragicall Historye of Romeus and Iuliet*. The

[94]Ibid., p. lx-lxi. See *Notes and Queries*, 9th ser. 6:206. Furnivall wonders whether "Shakspere and his brothers and sisters when *petites*" were "taught at home by a former friar or priest."

[95]Harrison, *Autobiographical Memoirs*, 2:288. Furnivall was also president of the London Shakespeare League, whose purpose according to him was to bring persons "into closer touch with Shakespeare by getting to know how and where he lived, what he did and said in ordinary everyday life, . . . what Shakespeare owed to London and to the men and women he met there, and what London owed to him." Munro, *Furnivall*, pp. 63-64.

[96]Halliday, *The Cult of Shakespeare*, p. 168.

first of the series of allusion books contained reprints of well-known Elizabethan material, such as Robert Greene's *Groatsworth of Wit* and Henry Chettle's *King-Hart's Dream*, the other two volumes in the series being shorter, critical, allusive excerpts. In the Shakespeare's England Series were Harrison's *Description of England,*[97] Philip Stubbs's *Anatomie of Abuses*, and some other shorter pieces. Furnivall's edition of the *Digby Mysteries* was the only volume in the projected series of "emergent dramatic genres." Four numbers of the Miscellanies Series had also been published. Papers appearing in the *Transactions* were matched in quality by only the very best analytical German scholarship, and throughout the period of the society's existence a large gathering of distinguished scholars regularly presented and discussed the papers.

Of course, Swinburne was not the only critic of Furnivall and the New Shakspere Society. A review of Furnivall's introduction to *The Royal Shakspere* in the *Saturday Review* attacks Furnivall's critical methodology and argues that he imposes himself on the text, thereby revealing "a charming absence of false modesty." The reviewer comments that the introduction is

> a remarkable work, remarkable for kindness and condescension both to its subject and its readers, for a curious mixture of jauntiness and pedantry in style, for a strange method of spelling, and for an extraordinary amount of information concerning Mr. Furnivall, Mr. Furnivall's friends, Mr. Furnivall's works, the New Shakespearean Society founded by Mr. Furnivall, and the paging of certain editions of works in Mr. Furnivall's possession to which Mr. Furnivall refers.[98]

In an article in *Shakepeareana* in April, 1892, entitled "A History of Shakespearian Criticism," George Hallam writes of "that peculiar phase of Shakespearean criticism known as Verse Tests," and, after referring to Spedding, continues:

> The subsequent appropriation of these verse tests by the extraordinary Furnivall, and their exploitation by him to comic lengths went far to settle their fate. . . . While passing, it may be added that Furnivall's career in what he himself calls "Shakespearian criticism" was noteworthy only for puerility and gossip, and

[97]See *Edinburgh Review* 146 (August, 1877): 199-225.

[98]*Saturday Review*, October, 1822, pp. 544-45. See *Spectator*, October, 1908, p. 592.

> has left no abiding stone upon the cairn. That Furnivall spent toilsome nights and laborious days among old books is undeniable. But whatever of value he extracted he noted in a syntax and an etymology so peculiar and personal that to read him became a labor and a weariness to the flesh; the effect being that whatever he touched remained about as inaccessible after as before his services were enlisted.[99]

This is a very harsh judgment. The metrical tests at least helped confirm the chronology of the plays, and Furnivall was not exaggerating when he claimed in 1875 that the New Shakspere Society's work had led to a general revival of interest in Shakespeare.[100] And of course, outside the society, Furnivall himself was forever encouraging people to study Shakespeare, hold readings, give lectures, and publish their work. Whether listening to Shakespeare readings at the London Working Men's College or attending meetings of the London Shakespeare League, he continued to give his active support,[101] and anyone genuinely interested in the dramatist could count on his guidance.

A short time before she and Furnivall founded the Browning Society, Emily Hickey, the Irish poet and essayist, was, according to her biographer, welcomed at Dr. Furnivall's house, where she "met a number of people . . . whose names loomed large in the literary world. The Shakespearean evenings discovered in Emily a talent for dramatic reading. . . . She was invited to take part in the Shakespearian readings." Charlotte Stopes, the Scottish scholar, records, in *A Volume of Personal Record*, her indebtedness to Furnivall for having helped and inspired her to publish *Shakespeare's Warwickshire Contemporaries* (1897) and *William Hunnis and the Revels of the Chapel Royal* (1902).

In his campaign to promote an interest in the study of Shakespeare, Furnivall did not hesitate to approach the highest in the land. The following letter was sent to Octavius Blewith Esq., from 10 Downing Street on December 10, 1873:

> Can you kindly give me, for Mr. Gladstone's benefit, any information about Mr. F. J. Furnivall, who I believe is a student especially of Chaucer & Spenser?

[99] *Shakespeareana* 9 (April, 1892): 98.

[100] See *New Shakspere Society Transactions*, 1874, Appendix, p. 5.

[101] It is hard to understand a letter that Furnivall wrote to Sidney Lee in 1901 about a newly founded British Empire Shakespeare Society in which he says, "Can't we trust Shakspere to popularise himself without a Soc[iet]y?" Bodleian Library, MS. Eng. Misc. d. 177, fol. 129-30, letter, September 2, 1901.

> I mean as to (1) his merits as a student (2) any works that he may have published (3) his position in life—is he well off? Mr. Gladstone wishes to know about him (not because he has applied for a pension for he has not done so) but because he has invited Mr. Gladstone to become Vice-President of a Shakspere Society of which I enclose a programme (which please return). Can you tell me the meaning of "unstopt lines"—see page two, line three.[102]

On February 28, 1874, Furnivall wrote to Gladstone:

> As your former letter said that you would consider the question of joining *The New Shakspere Society*—as one of its Vice-Presidents, when you knew more of what its work was to be, I venture to enclose you the revised Prospectus with our list of Papers on p.2 and the list of Publications. I do trust that you will read the Prospectus, approve of both the end we are working for, and the means we are taking to get to this end; and that you will not only join us, but work at *Shakspere* yourself, and tell us Victorians what you think of the great Elizabethan.[103]

To the above letter Gladstone's secretary attached the following note for the prime minister's attention:

> Mr. Furnivall again asks you to join his New Shakspere Society—of wh. he sends prospectus—and hopes that you will work yourself at that part. (Mr. F. has too many irons in the fire, I shd. think, to be a very dependable person for the chief managership of such a society). Also, you may like to look at the inclosed correspondence in the Athenaeum of this week. It has been going on for some time. He has attacked some very well-known literary men.

The reference is to two articles in the *Athenaeum* of February 28, 1874. The first is a vicious reply by Furnivall to an attack by a "subscriber" on the New Shakspere Society; the second is an answer by W. J. Thoms to Furnivall's harsh judgment of his Chaucer criticism, which "did not tempt" Furnivall "to ask him for Shakspere help."[104] Gladstone, however, was not upset or put off by Furnivall's journal wars. On July 8, 1880, Furnivall wrote again to Downing Street:

> I have ventured to dedicate to you the Facsimile of the *Second* Quarto of *Hamlet* which first gave the real play to the world. As the *Forewords* contain

[102]King's College Library, Furnivall Papers.

[103]British Library, Add. MS 44443, fol. 43.

[104]*Athenaeum*, February 28, 1874, p. 293.

controversial matter, I have taken care to say that the Dedication was made without your leave.[105]

His reward was a letter written by Gladstone himself on September 9, 1880:

I am sure you will believe that my long delay in acknowledging your letter and your very acceptable gifts had not been due to indifference or neglect. I thank you very much for them and hope after a couple of days to place them in the Shakespeare corner of my library.[106]

To encourage the study of Shakespeare and to bring the New Shakspere Society's work to the notice of students, the society, like the EETS and the Chaucer Society, gave prizes of its completed publications to "a certain number of the more important colleges and Schools in Great Britain, the United States and Germany."[107]

On May 6, 1875, Furnivall gave a lecture on Shakespeare to a "large and fashionable" audience at Trinity College, Dublin. He announced that his chief desire was "to stimulate a love for Shakespearean readings or parties similar to those which he had established in London." He described the plan adopted in England whereby eighteen or twenty people assembled at a friend's house or at an institution for the purpose of beginning a study of Shakespeare's plays.[108] Furnivall also referred to Dowden's work on Shakespeare and told his audience that he was "delighted to see the interest which was being taken in Shakespeare at the present time. The advance made in England in that direction during the past two year was something enormous."[109] On August 24, 1876, George Meredith wrote to Furnivall about giving a paper to the society:

I will communicate with you by & by, & ask your aid, being sure that I may count on it. I have two subjects in view, one—Heine; and the other—Moliere

[105]British Library, Add. MS 44465, fol. 85.

[106]King's College Library, Furnivall Papers. Gladstone sent Furnivall a gift of books, and the latter wrote on September 11, 1880, "I shall value your letter and present all my life, and tell my boy to treasure them afterwards." British Library, Add. MS 44466, fols 63-64.

[107]*New Shakspere Society Transactions*, 1874, Appendix, pp. 8-9. Some of the institutions named are Bedford Grammar School; Trinity College, Dublin; King's College, London; University College, London; Owen's College, Manchester; Herrig's Academy, Berlin; St. Andrew's University; and University of California.

[108]*Dublin Morning Mail*, May 10, 1875.

[109]Ibid.

& the Idea of Pure Comedy. They will each require considerable time for the writing, as I understand them. Accept my fullest thanks for your thoughtfulness on my behalf.[110]

Meredith reported the outcome of his lecture in a letter to Furnivall on February 3, 1877: "The Secretary says I shot too high. . . . I wish it *had* been possible for you to be there, that I might benefit by your judgement."[111]

At this time Furnivall was deeply embroiled in the Swinburne affair, but that did not stop him from applying, unsuccessfully, in June of that year for the principalship of University College, Bristol. Henry Hucks Gibbs (later governor of the Bank of England), wrote on June 7, 1877: "I hope you get the Principalship at Bristol. You have had considerable experience in teaching and great experience in organizing"[112] (Furnivall had also applied in 1865 for the post of librarian at the Guildhall).[113]

One of the most important books published by the society was *Centurie of Prayse*, a collection of allusions to Shakespeare edited by Clement M. Ingleby and presented by him to the society in 1874. In a second edition, presented by Ingleby in 1879, the number of allusions to Shakespeare and his works had risen from 228 to 356. In 1886, Furnivall produced *Some 300 Fresh Allusions to Shakspere from 1594 to 1694 A.D. Gathered by Members of the New Shakspere Society*, the fruits of a project that must have called forth many of the techniques Furnivall used for work on the *New English Dictionary*. In 1908, John Munro, Furnivall's collaborator and disciple, added 130 new allusions to a combined edition of the *Centurie* and *Fresh Allusions*, and in 1932 the book was reissued in two volumes with a preface by Sir Edmund Chambers; the volumes are dedicated to Furnivall.

As in some of his other publications, Furnivall allowed some mistakes to creep into the texts of *Fresh Allusions*. For example, in the entry "Fuller, *Worthies*, 1672. FJF" (volume 2, page 183), the

[110]Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 609.

[111]Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 610.

[112]Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 320. See Dowden's recommendation, MS FU 278.

[113]See Sir John Seeley's recommendation, Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 803, March 1, 1865.

date should be 1662. In a letter to Furnivall dated March 27, 1887, P. Round lists a large number of corrections and notes for *Fresh Allusions*. For example:

> [The book] seems to have wanted more editing; page 121. What is the reference in Halliwell's *Folio Shakspere?* [Furnivall wrote in the letter "don't know"]. . . . p. 261. Should we read "Falstaf" in the 2nd. line of stanza 5? If "Falstaf" is in the original it should be so stated [Furnivall wrote "I suppose so"].[114]

Once again it seems that Furnivall was too eager to make the text available as soon as possible. By the time the work appeared in print, he had moved on to something else, and, as his comments indicate, he had no further interest in it.

In the midst of his Shakespeare and other literary activities, Furnivall still found time to scull on the Thames and involve himself in all kinds of other schemes and campaigns. In *A Personal Record*, P. S. G. Propert describes a surprise visit from Furnivall at Cambridge:

> From the first moment of his entry we felt that we were in the presence of a real character, although we had no idea who he was. He introduced himself by telling us his name was Furnivall, and explained that he was up in Cambridge, doing some Shakespeare work in the University Library.

The purpose of Furnivall's visit was to canvass support for a new plan he had in mind: to replace rowing fours and eights with sculling fours and eights. Although Furnivall was president of several rowing clubs at the Working Men's College, his main interest was in sculling. In 1883 or 1884 he carried out experiments to prove that sculls were superior to oars; races were conducted, and Furnivall galloped on horseback along the riverbank umpiring them. The London Rowing Club followed his example and found too that sculls were superior. In 1884, Furnivall also stroked the winning four (oars) in the mile scratch race at the Maurice Rowing Club (one of the Working Men's College clubs), and in 1886 he sculled three in the winning sculling four—at the age of sixty-one. Shortly afterward he began a campaign to extend the basis of amateur oarsmanship that led to the founding

[114]King's College Library, Furnivall Papers.

of the National Amateur Rowing Association in 1890. Describing the period of negotiation, P. S. G. Propert writes:

> Furnivall was not by nature a diplomatist, and many of those who were as anxious as he to widen the amateur definition, endeavoured, though in vain, to point out that in addressing members of the University, moderation in language was desirable and more likely to secure the object in view. But he was nothing if not real and true to himself, and when he visited Cambridge he never failed to point out the snobbishness on the part of the University in sending its best men into the slums of the East End to address the people as "Dearly beloved brethren" on Sunday, but from the rowing point of view, to regard them as cads on Monday. It is possible that had Furnivall been more discreet and diplomatic, the amateur definition would have been put upon a broader basis and the need for the N.A.R.A. might never have arisen. But this was not to be, and at those early meetings . . . lively scenes often occurred, and the writer, when occupying the chair, frequently had to pull the Doctor's coat-tails as a signal that his language was not wholly Shakespearean.[115]

The *Old-Spelling Shakspere*, edited by Furnivall and W. G. Boswell-Stone, appeared in 1908.[116] In an interview a few months before his death Furnivall expressed his regret that, although the New Shakspere Society had "rendered great service to the study of the poet, and had been the foundation of the best researches into Shakspere literature," the members had been unable to publish the texts of the plays in the original spelling. "We ought to have an 'Old-Spelling Shakspere,' " he complained, "but people do not like the trouble of reading 'u' for 'v,' and 'then' for 'than,' and solving little puzzles of this kind; they prefer the modernised text because it is easier to read."[117] His Introduction to the *Leopold Shakspere* made literary friends and correspondents for Furnivall all over the world. Since he had so frequently spoken out against "flunkeyism" and snobbery, he was criticized by many for naming the volume after Prince Leopold, a patron of the New Shakspere Society. In fact, Furnivall was very much opposed to the title, and it was actually a member of the

[115]Munro, *Furnivall*, pp. 152–54.

[116]Frederick James Furnivall and W. G. Boswell-Stone, eds., *The Old-Spelling Shakspere: Being the Works of Shakspere in the Spelling of the Best Quarto and Folio Texts . . .*, Intro. by F. W. Clarke, Shakespeare Library.

[117]*Great Thoughts from Master Minds*, 8:90.

publishing firm who obtained the royal permission to use it. The text was enlarged and published as *Shakspere: Life and Work* by Furnivall and Munro in 1908 and reprinted in 1910. Explaining how he came to write the introduction to the *Leopold Shakspere* for Cassell & Company, Furnivall wrote that the publishers had obtained some German illustrations for the plays and asked him to write a twenty-five-page introduction for the sum of £30. Inevitably, Furnivall's essay came to one hundred pages, but Cassell & Company accepted it and paid him £100.[118] By 1910 sales had probably exceeded 120,000 copies. The importance of these and other New Shakspere Society texts for encouraging play reading and the teaching of Shakespeare in schools, colleges, and universities is obvious.[119]

In Germany the work of the New Shakspere Society was as celebrated as the activities of the EETS and Furnivall, called "one of the main links between English and German scholarship," was elected one of the few honorary members of the German Shakspere Society. According to Josef Schick, of the University of Munich, Furnivall never tired of hearing how much German students appreciated English literature and how in Germany a traditional love of Shakespeare showed itself in the schools, the university and the theater and "in the literary consciousness of the nation." It was clear that Furnivall was far more deeply appreciated in German universities than he was at Oxford or Cambridge.

Furnivall's great literary alliance with Germany received a nasty jolt in January, 1896, when the "Kruger telegram" became public.[120]

[118]Ibid. Simon Nowell-Smith, writing about Cassell's publications for the 1870's and 1880's states, ". . . there was 'the cheapest Complete Shakespeare ever yet published,' the People's Edition of the Leopold Shakespeare, dedicated to Prince Leopold, Duke of Albany, with an introduction by Dr. Furnivall." Simon Nowell-Smith, *The House of Cassell, 1848-1958*, p. 105.

[119]T. Gregory Foster recalls that "the name 'Dr. Furnivall' had been familiar from annotated editions of Shakspere and Chaucer even in one's schooldays." Munro, *Furnivall*, pp. 57-58. Furnivall's ambition was to make available inexpensive texts for students. The New Shakspere Society had barely opened its doors when Foster reported: "The Director had procur'd the issue of a new and cheaper edition of the translation of Gervinus's *Commentaries on Shakspere* . . . of a cheap reprint of Singer's . . . edition of *Shakspere's Dramatic Works*, . . . the preparation of a Shilling Series of Shakspere's Plays for Schools, etc under the Superintendence of Prof. Dowden and himself . . . . Professor Dowden is writing a shilling 'Shakspere' Primer." *New Shakspere Society Transactions*, 1874, Appendix, p. 3n. A complete list of the society's publications from 1874 to 1890 is given at the end of the *Transactions* for 1887-92.

[120]A message from Emperor William II of Germany to President Paul Kruger, of the South African Republic (Transvaal), congratulating him on repelling Jameson's Raid, an attack from

Emperor William II of Germany wired President Paul Kruger of the Transvaal, congratulating him on repelling the Jameson Raid, an attack from the British-controlled Cape Colony. The emperor's intention was to show the British that they were diplomatically isolated and should become friendly with Germany. The German scholar Alois Brandl writes:

> Furnivall answered it by a postcard breathing threats and slaughter, as if I had myself been the author of the message, and for many years he lost no opportunity of giving me to understand that he considered the Germans as cousins only, but the Americans as brothers. This feeling ebbed away in course of time, and in 1909 he made his peace by a charming act of courtesy, when he once more nominated a German to a vice-presidency in the Early English Text Society.[121]

Furnivall's Teutonic bias is seen in his great admiration for German scholars. He was also, of course, indebted to their pioneer work in philology and their painstaking study of Shakespeare; he was deeply impressed by the thoroughness and capacity for hard work that he detected in German researchers in the British Museum. When A. S. Napier applied in 1885 for the newly created Merton Professorship of English Language and Literature, in the face of heavy opposition from Churton Collins and others,[122] Furnivall wrote a testimonial for him. Furnivall was obviously eager to support the disciple of his friend Zupitza, but he was also keen to promote the candidacy of a philologist to the important new chair. Napier, who "set himself wholeheartedly to the task of his life, the introduction and organisation of the scientific study of English at Oxford,"[123] was instrumental in the creation of a Final Honour School of English in June, 1894. Furnivall sent him one of his characteristic postcards: "I congratulate you heartily. You've won the match off your own bat. . . . What a spendid an-

the British-controlled Cape Colony. The emperor's intention was to show the British that they were diplomatically isolated and should become friendly with Germany.

[121]Munro, *Furnivall*, pp. 14-15.

[122]See C. H. Firth, *The School of English Language and Literature*, p. 27; *Quarterly Review* 163 (October, 1886): 326; and *Academy* 29 (February 6, 1886): 94-95; 29 (February 13, 1886): 112-13; 29 (February 20, 1886): 131-32.

[123]Neil Ker, "A. S. Napier, 1853-1916," in *Philological Essays*, ed. James L. Rosier, p. 159. See also *Testimonials in Favour of Arthur S. Napier* (Göttingen, 1885), cited in ibid, p. 154.

swer and rebuke you've given to the geese who hisst at your appointment."[124]

Apart from his invaluable series of quarto facsimiles and his work on Harrison, Furnivall's most significant contribution to Shakespeare studies was his Introduction to the *Leopold Shakspere* which is really an extension of his Introduction to Gervinus and so contains the kernel of his ideas. To establish the chronological order of the plays and to study Shakespeare *as a whole*, Furnivall handled the complicated evidence, internal and external, as no one else before him had. He upset the traditional order of the plays and put *The Tempest* last instead of first, saw new links between the plays, and brought out the different characteristics of the four periods of Shakespeare's work. The New Shakspere Society cannot, of course, compare in importance to the Early English Text Society or the Chaucer Society, but it has significance for the student of English literary scholarship. Despite its notoriety, the six-year Swinburne-Furnivall war provided a landmark in the history of criticism in that it brought to a head the controversy over the relative worth of historical, linguistic, scientific criticism as opposed to what can be called intuitive, impressionistic, and aesthetic criticism.

## *The Browning Society* (1881), *The Shelley Society* (1886), and *The Wyclif Society* (1881)

The work of the New Shakspere Society led to the founding of the Browning Society in 1881 by Furnivall and by Emily Hickey,[125] whose genteel restraint was a perfect foil for his impulsiveness. At the inaugural meeting on October 28, 1881, Furnivall gave a detailed account of how the society came into existence. Referring to the work of his other literary societies, he explained that, having covered English literature from its beginnings to the sixteenth and seven-

[124]Ker, "A. S. Napier," p. 159. Ker writes: "Soon after he came to Oxford, Napier was occupied with two major pieces of work, neither of which was ever published. . . . Furnivall wrote on the last day of 1891, 'Finish your Historical English Grammar, to show them (sc. 'those cursed Oxford Dons' referred to nine lines above) how much is involved in the knowledge of English as you would have it known.' " Ibid., p. 171.

[125]See E. M. Dinnis, *Emily Hickey*.

teenth centuries, he had decided that it was time to undertake a contemporary, living poet, and the one who came to mind was Browning. After Hickey expressed her great admiration for Browning, Furnivall invited her to visit the poet with him and asked her whether she would help him form a Browning society. On their way to Browning's home in Warwick Crescent on Sunday, July 3, 1881, Furnivall made up his mind to found the society.[126]

Furnivall had first met Browning in Tennyson's drawing room in May, 1874. When the project was mentioned to Browning, he apparently did not refuse. "He laught heartily and talk't of something else," Furnivall said, but Browning was heard to murmur in French later, "It seems to me that this kind of thing borders on the ridiculous." Plans went ahead immediately—and would have in any event, because when Hickey asked Furnivall what would happen if Browning refused, he replied, "Go on all the same and not mind him."[127] Caroline Spurgeon gives the following account of the founding:

> Some lady said to him [Furnivall] one afternoon, casually, "I wonder you don't found a Browning Society, for Browning's works are every bit as obscure and undecipherable as any of your Early English texts." "You are quite right," was the Doctor's reply, and on the way home he bought a pound's worth of stamps, sat up all night writing letters to suitable people on the subject, and by the evening of the following day the first members had joined.[128]

That in Browning there was nothing to be learned from the glories of a distant past did not really matter, for the living Browning could provide for persons' needs in the present in a way that neither Chaucer nor Shakespeare could. Carlyle might contemplate his heroes Goethe and Shakespeare communing with the divine spirit of the universe, but, for many literate Victorians, Browning was a symbol of spiritual authority, a poet-prophet who would succour them in an age of materialism and skepticism. Edward Berdoe went as far as to claim that Browning was not a "mere man" but a "Buddha on the highest peak of the Himalayas of thought." Of course, for Furnivall, Browning

[126]Frederick James Furnivall, *How the Browning Society Came into Being*, p. 1.

[127]William Irvine and Park Honan, *The Book, the Ring and the Poet*, p. 500.

[128]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. 184. Some of these members were Sir Frederic Leighton, president of the Royal Academy; Henry Irving; Eleanor Marx; and Dorothea Beale and Frances Buss, two pioneers in higher education for women.

had no equal in modern poetry: "He is not for lovers of the commonplace, the pretty, or the sentimental, for drawing-room misses or namby-pamby dawdlers. He is for men and women with the thews of mind and soul which move the world and raise their possessors to the highest level that mortals can attain."[129] In his usual impulsive way Furnivall had thought at first that Tennyson was the greatest poet of all—greater even than Shakespeare. He later changed his mind and decided that Tennyson had sacrificed virility to polish and that Browning was far more English in his ruggedness and strength.

Happily, Browning's religious position was uncertain enough to accommodate both Christians and agnostics. Even militant agnostics like Furnivall could allow him to be not only a great poet but also a great moral force, whose *broad* religion could uplift the masses. Before Browning's poetry could achieve these ends, however, it needed not editing like Chaucer's texts but explication and publicity. Furnivall was only too pleased to help.

The aims of the society are set forth in the prospectus, issued by the founders in July, 1881.[130] They are the study and discussion of Browning's works, the publication of papers on the works, the formation of Browning reading clubs, the performance of Browning's dramas by amateur companies, the writing of a Browning primer, the compilation of a Browning concordance or lexicon, and generally the extension of the study and influence of the poet.[131]

Oddly enough, Furnivall did not immediately become president of the society. It was not until June 24, 1887, that his election took place, an event about which Furnivall for some reason was rather coy. Browning wrote to congratulate him on June 27:

> I am glad to hear that "this"—(the proposal that you should become in word as well as deed President of Your Society)—"this took you quite aback"— as a push forward to the proper place was calculated to do: indeed you have all along really "presided," and any interloper would cut a poor figure in your

[129]Esther P. Defries, *A Browning Primer*, p. vi. This book (with its introduction by Furnivall) was reprinted in 1970.

[130]See Frederick James Furnivall, "The Browning Society," *Literary World* 13 (March, 1882): 77.

[131]"First Report of the Browning Society's Committee," *Browning Society Papers* 1 (1881-84): appendix, p. 1.

> visionary stead. Continue, I beseech you, to play the "firebrand"—which warms one in cold weather,—and "agnostic" which pleasantly reminds those who need it that they don't know everything,—and, above all, continue to be the good friend and kind helpmate of Yours truly.[132]

Apparently, Tennyson had agreed to become president, but when he found out that the society was being treated as a joke, he withdrew. To begin with, at least, Browning himself was uneasy because "none of my personal friends figure in the list of members." On October 29, 1881, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote to Furnivall from Cambridge, Massachusetts, "I am reluctant to join any society whose meetings I cannot attend,"[133] and on April 8, 1882, George Meredith informed Furnivall, "I would rather not be enrolled on the Committee—I wish I could promise a lecture or paper on Browning."[134]

At first the society was attacked in many quarters,[135] and Furnivall was soon dashing off angry letters to various periodicals and newspapers. William Irvine and Park Honan describe the reaction to the founding of the society:

> A press cannonade resounded. *The Nation* fired at the "mysteries" of the Browningites, *The Cambridge Review* at their "congregational spirit," and *The Echo* at their dense honorifics. Shot and shell as usual galvanised Dr. Furnivall to a barrage of confident and rather hyperbolic letters: "As to the interpretations of difficult poems," he serenely defied *The Echo* from Primrose Hill, "our Society will soon be able to make all clear."[136]

Furnivall was eager to emphasize that it was for himself and his contemporaries that he wanted the works of Browning expounded. At the first meeting, at University College, on Gower Street, three hundred persons (seventy of whom were already members) listened to him boldly proclaim:

> I do not affect to share Browning's religious views, . . . but . . . I do heartily desire the spread of the study and influence of Robert Browning; for having lived some years with Chaucer and Shakspere, to try and know what a Man is,

[132]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. lxix. Munro mistakes this congratulatory letter for a letter of proposal.

[133]Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 497.

[134]Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 611.

[135]See Amy Cruise, *The Victorians and Their Reading*, p. 202.

[136]Irvine and Honan, *The Book, the Ring and the Poet*, p. 501. See, for example, *Echo*, October 29, 1891; *London Daily News*, January 2, 1882 p. 2; *Pall Mall Gazette*, 1884, p. 11.

> and what a Poet is, I declare my conviction that Browning is the manliest, the strongest, the life-fullest, the deepest, and thought-fullest living poet, the one most needing earnest study, and the one most worthy of it.[137]

Furnivall also announced grandly: "Some low-minded folk have attributed unworthy motives to me. 'Tis their Nature to. I pass them by." To the objection from a ducal correspondent that it was "300 years too early for a Browning Society," Furnivall retorted:

> You've never founded a Chaucer or Shakspere Society, and had to worry and bother of this word and that, this allusion and the other. . . . If you had you'd never have thought it superfluous for a set of the contemporaries of each poet to have cleared up all your bothers for you, you'd have blest them every day of your life.[138]

Although the Browning Society was in many respects the most important and most colorful of its kind, one reason that it was also the most ridiculed and the most criticized was that it had undertaken the study of not only a living poet but a poet whose work most readers and critics throughout the country regarded as too obscure to bother with. Writing to Elizabeth D. West (later Mrs. Edward Dowden) in November, 1881, Browning says:

> I will tell you how I feel about the Society. It was instituted without my knowledge, and when knowledge was, I do not think acquiescence had need of being asked for. I write poems that they might be read, and—fifty years now—people said they were unintelligible. If other people, in the fullness of days, reply "we understand them, and will show that you may, if you will be at the pains," I should think it ungracious indeed to open my mouth for the first time on the matter with "Pray let the other people alone in their protested ignorance."[139]

Furnivall, of course, was fully aware of Browning's unpopularity, and it was partly on account of the prevalent charge of obscurity that the Browning Society was formed. Writing in 1881, Furnivall observed: "Browning is the Gladstone of poetry. The first of our Nation, though

[137]Frederick James Furnivall, *How the Browning Society Came into Being*, pp. 2–3. Furnivall's first published remarks on Browning's poetry are in *Notes and Queries*, March, 1876, pp. 244–45.

[138]Furnivall, *How the Browning Society Came into Being*, p. 2.

[139]W. H. Griffin and H. C. Minchin, *The Life of Robert Browning*, p. 269.

he has not the great statesman's fire or clearness, and cannot move the heart of all like Gladstone can."[140] Another reason was the suggestion that Algernon Charles Swinburne was a greater poet than Browning: "One main motive with me for taking this step was some talk and writing of a certain cymbal-tinkler being a greater poet—that is, maker, creator of men and women—than Browning. I couldn't stand that."[141] Furnivall also claimed that to put Swinburne above Browning "is like putting a park-hack above the best steeplechaser in England."[142] That Browning was grateful to the Browning Society for its efforts to popularize him is clear in the letter to West:

> Exactly what has touched me is the sudden assemblage of men and women to whose names, for the most part, I am a stranger who choose to incur the ridicule sure to come readily to the critics who dispose of my work by the easy word "unintelligible," instead of saying safely to themselves "I understand it—or something of it—anyhow!" That there would be exaggeration in the approval was to be looked for; they react against a good deal.[143]

In his excellent book *The London Browning Society, 1881-1892*, Charles Michael Hancher points out, "The many who expected Browning to take offense at applause from literary amateurs, failed to take into account his long-standing distaste for literary professionals." According to Hancher, Browning welcomed the society as "a kind of vindicating popular revolution against the decrees of an entrenched and incompetent literary establishment."[144]

There were other reasons for attacks on the Browning Society and Browningites. For one thing, the society's very existence upset the devotees of other single authors whose works were being "appreciated" in similar societies. For instance, during the latter part of the nineteenth century there were the Carlyle Society, the Brontë Society, the Ruskin Society, and the Burns Society. Like the Browning Society, all were suspect in the eyes of those who regarded cults, or the narrow study of

[140]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. lxv. See Peterson, *Browning's Trumpeter*, pp. 193-203.

[141]*Pall Mall Gazette*, December 14, 1889, pp. 1-2.

[142]"The Shelley Centenary: A Chat with Dr. Furnivall M.A.," *Oracle*, January 16, 1892, p. 12.

[143]Griffin and Minchin, *Life of Browning*, p. 269.

[144]Charles Michael Hancher, "The London Browning Society, 1881-1892" (Ph.D. diss. Yale University, 1967), pp. 40-41.

a single literary figure, as prone not only to prejudice and adulation but to sheer absurdity. Often these suspicions were justified: members made excessive claims and reached hasty conclusions, and rather precious afternoon teas became the occasion for literary scholarship.[145] After Furnivall's superlative "appreciation" of Chaucer and Shakespeare, his society was naturally a prime target for attack.

Not all the societies were "personage societies." The Wordsworth Society, although it received its share of ridicule, was largely responsible for restoring Wordsworth's reputation, and other societies through their literary crusades did much useful work, for instance, by providing valuable historical and biographical materials and by increasing readers' interest in their favorite writers.[146]

Disregarding their unpopularity, Browning Society members set to work to accomplish the ends set forth in the prospectus. Furnivall recruited "volunteer" workers just as persuasively as he had for his other societies. Although he had been unable to enlist James Thomson (of *The City of Dreadful Night*) for work on the dictionary, he did persuade him to join the Browning Society. Thomson described his enlistment in half-amused, half-annoyed terms:

> The enclosed [Browning Society prospectus] will show you what that headlong & masterful young cuss of fifty, Furnivall, has committed me to utterly without my consent or even knowledge. I am not only a member of his Browning Society, it seems, but on the Committee, & moreover I have to read a paper on a specified evening. This last imposition is atrocious. . . . fix me to a precise day, & my impulse to bolt or jib is almost irresistible.[147]

The first publication in the *Browning Society Papers* was a reprint of Browning's essay on the spurious *Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, originally published by Browning in 1852, and a *Bibliography of R. Browning*, edited by Furnivall (1881) and "Dedicated (tho' without his leave askt) to Robert Browning, 'a Man' True as Steel, a Poet,

[145]Max Beerbohm's famous caricature, *Mr. Robert Browning Taking Tea with the Browning Society* is in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. For a discussion of the drawing, see Hancher, "The London Browning Society," Appendix A, p. 222. For further remarks about Browningites, see Maisie Ward, *Robert Browning and His World*, p. 200.

[146]A list of the society's meetings and papers is given in what must be the definitive account of the Browning Society: William S. Peterson, *Interrogating the Oracle*, Appendix A.

[147]Bodleian Library MS Don. d. 109, fol. 287, letter to J. W. Barrs, August 28, 1881.

Searcher of Men's Minds and Souls.'" Although hurriedly prepared and not without omissions, the *Bibliography* is a good one and received unanimous praise from the critics.[148] In New York the *Nation* commented:

> Mr. Robert Browning's admirers in this country should not rest easy until they procure the "Bibliography of Robert Browning" edited by Mr. F. J. Furnivall for the new Browning Society. . . . [It] contains a copious bibliography, with endless footnotes, and an appendix impulsively got together as a guide to the various "Selections" from Browning's poems. . . . Mr. Furnivall's personality and the characteristics of English hero-worshippers make this volume amusing as well as valuable.[149]

When Furnivall undertook the compilation of a bibliography of the poetry and Browning criticism from *Pauline* on, Browning made it clear that he wanted to forget the early attacks on his poems, the "misconception at best, ignorance at middling, and malice at worst." He preferred to remember the conscientious criticism he had received and to forget the amount of "mere mopping and mowing and such monkey-tricks" that had plagued him for so long.

In the next few years the Society made rapid progress in its undertakings. Irvine and Honan write:

> Furnivall's banners advanced like Charlemagne's. Though attracting a skeptic or two (Bernard Shaw, who was learning to speak wittily in public, and Thomas Wise, who was learning to forge expertly in private), the London Browning Society could almost agree that its poet was an unparalleled "thinker and philosopher."[150]

At the society's meetings Furnivall's aim was normally to lead and stimulate discussion, whichever way it went.[151] Frequently he read

[148]The reviewer of *A Bibliography of R. Browning* wrote: "The alphabetical list of all the works of the poet, with the dates of their first appearances, and chronological list, with the number of lines, and the measure and metre of each, will be of great value and interest to us all." *Nation* 1 (December, 1881): 29. See also ibid., p. 186, for a review of the *Supplement* that Furnivall provided for *Bibliography*. For other reviews; see *Echo*, November 4, 1881; *Boston Literary World*, April 22, 1882; *Critic*, August, 1882.

[149]*Nation* 34 (April 27, 1882): *Notes and Queries* describes the *Bibliography* as "a perfect magazine of Browning lore." *Notes and Queries* 5 (May, 1882): 360.

[150]Irvine and Honan, *The Book, the Ring and the Poet*, p. 502.

[151]See "First Report of the Browning Society Committee" (given on July 7, 1882), *Browning Society Papers* 1 (1881–84), Appendix, p. 1.

papers written by members who were unable to attend. Worse, if papers failed to materialize, he simply read papers already published or delivered elsewhere. Maisie Ward writes, ". . . in the background of Shaw, and his fireworks, of the many highly intelligent papers read, of the plays sometimes even brilliantly produced—the energy, drive, near-genius of one man is apparent . . . Dr. Furnivall."[152]

Furnivall's limitations as a critic are also seen in his work in Browning. The techniques of historical and textual scholarship so well suited to the study of writers of past centuries and to Furnivall's favorite study, social history, could not easily be made use of to evaluate the work of a living poet. That did not prevent Furnivall from trying to participate as fully as Browning scholars did in the society's work. On February 25, 1887, he read to the forty-eighth meeting of the Browning Society a paper entitled "A Grammatical Analysis of 'O Lyric Love.' " Furnivall claimed that the paper was an effort to provide an escape from discussions of Browning's religion, but it amounted to only a very boring parsing of Browning's lines and probably drove members back to their theology.[153] When a friend of Browning scholar Edward Berdoe criticized the paper, Furnivall recorded (no doubt with a chuckle) in a footnote, "An irreverent friend of Dr. Berdoe's has cal'd it 'Furnivall's Jubilee Conundrum,' " adding, "To some minds nothing is sacred!"[154]

The papers of other members covered a great variety of topics. For example, James Thomson gave "Notes on the Genius of Robert Browning," Hiram Corson lectured on "Personality, and Art as Its Vice-Agent, as Treated by Browning," Eleanor Marx gave "A Short Account of the Abbé Vogler," and Dorothea Beale spoke on "The Religious Teaching of Browning."[155]

*The Browning Society Papers* (in twelve parts), which comprise a record of the results of the society's studies, are certainly proof of the members' impressive scholarship. The most important contributors included James Thomson, Walter Raleigh, Arthur Symons,

[152]Maisie Ward, *Robert Browning*, p. 206.

[153]*Browning Society Papers* 2 (1885-91): 165-68.

[154]Ibid., p. 168n.

[155]An excellent account of the meetings is given in Peterson, *Interrogating the Oracle*, pp. 115-56.

C. H. Herford, Furnivall, and William M. Rossetti; among those best known for Browning studies alone were J. T. Nettleship, Berdoe, Helen J. Ormerod, and Mrs. Alexander Ireland. A close examination of the society's transactions reveals that the society had something to do with almost all the books published on Browning between 1881 and the end of the century. For example, the two principal nineteenth-century Browning handbooks were written by Mrs. Sutherland Orr (Browning's close friend) and by Berdoe; Furnivall and Thomas J. Wise produced the first two important bibliographies, and the first major Browning biographies were published by Mrs. Orr, William Sharp (better known as a minor poet under the name Fiona Macleod), and W. H. Griffin. Although not all the major books were published by the Browning Society, they were written by members who received their stimulus and encouragement from it, and as many as several hundred copies of the books were obtained for the other members. For example, Sharp's biography appeared soon after Browning's death, and two hundred copies were distributed to Browning Society members—accompanied by three pages of "corrections" by Furnivall.

Books published for the Browning Society alone (outside the *Papers*) were E. Radford's *Illustrations to Browning's Poems* (1882), the facsimile reprint of the almost unobtainable *Pauline*, and the reprint of Browning's *Prose Life of Strafford* (with "Forewords" by Furnivall),[156] issued by arrangement with Dana Estes, publisher and chairman of the Boston Browning Society.[157] Very few other Victorian writers were accorded such detailed study and explication. The stage was set for such monuments of twentieth-century Browning scholarship as W. C. De Vane's *Handbook* and the Leslie N. Broughton, Clark S. Northrup, and Robert Pearsall *Bibliography* (1953), which was to supersede Furnivall's.

In 1876, Furnivall began campaigning for an inexpensive edition of Browning's poems, for he was convinced that they were not reaching a large enough readership. For years he badgered Browning and his publisher, George Smith, becoming ever more insistent that

[156]Furnivall's "Forewords" contains a characteristic division of Browning's works into four "periods," with a prediction of a fifth.

[157]An account of this is given in Frederick James Furnivall, Forewords, *Robert Browning's Prose Life of Strafford*, p. xi.

"both a cheap selection from Browning's Works and a cheap double-column Edition of them are sadly wanted in England" when he discovered that Browning's poetry brought him an annual income that was only one-fifteenth that of Tennyson.[158] In 1883, following a hint from Browning that publication of a Shilling Selection from his works might be in the offing, Furnivall hurried to publish the news in the *Academy*, a precipitate action that delayed the book's appearance for seven years. Smith wrote to Browning, "It would be difficult to say exactly how much that Gentleman's impertinent interference with your works has cost you, but it is no inconsiderable sum."[159] An interesting letter to Furnivall on this subject from William G. Kingsland, dated January 2, 1886, reads:

> Get Browning's permission for a "cheap selection" (say 6′ or ls) from his short poems—*each poem prefaced with some introductory remarks illustrative or explanatory of its subject.* You see *the people*, whom you want to get interested in Browning, do not care to spend even 7s.6d. on the 2 vols. of "Selections"—more especially as they had been told they cannot understand him. Now as some of us have been lecturing to societies composed largely of the working people, if we could call their attention to a *cheap* edition. . . . At any rate, I offer the suggestion for what it is worth.

Kingsland also offers his opinion about the proposed Shelley Society:

> To me Shelley has always seemed the one real voice of his age. . . . the man Shelley, scouted by the religious circle, had more of the true, inborn *natural* religion in him than all the raving of Wordsworth or Coleridge, or the whole circle of the religious teachers of his day.[160]

When the Shilling Selection finally came out in 1890, the year after Browning's death, when Browning's son, Robert ("Pen"), gave his permission, Furnivall grumbled that it contained several "third-rate and uninteresting poems" and that the "careless chooser" had "confused the time-order of the pieces."[161]

[158]See Frederick James Furnivall, "The Late George Smith," *Athenaeum*, May 4, 1901. Browning earned about £436 in 1886 and £1,252 in 1888 from the sale of his poetry in England. See Roma A. King, *Robert Browning's Finances*.

[159]Peterson, *Interrogating the Oracle*, p. 37.

[160]Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 455.

[161]See Defries, *A Browning Primer*, p. v.

However unpleasant, Furnivall's tussle with Smith was motivated by his genuine desire to make available for students, workers, and readers at large both the beauty and the moral influence of Browning's poems. To Browning's credit, he understood Furnivall's deep sincerity. He said to George Smith:

> In spite of his blundering, Mr. Furnivall means beyond a doubt to do me all the service he is able: it is the old story of the friendly bear who broke the teeth of the man with the stone he meant to brush away a fly that had settled on his mouth.[162]

In a letter written on July 16, 1889, Browning tries to steady Furnivall. At the top of this letter Furnivall has added a comment: "Answer to my cursing Geo. Smith for stopping Prof. [William J.] Alexander's *Introduction to B.* coming into England, on acct. of its printing some Poems. I ordered 200 copies for the Soc$^{y}$ but we can't have 'em."

An excerpt from Browning's letter reads:

> Smith sells "Collections," and pays me for the right of doing so, while he cannot hinder the Americans for taking them over paying nothing at all: so that you cannot wonder if he is disinclined to allow the payer-of-nothing there to compete with his publications here, and pay nothing into the bargain: so "curse nobody but grin and bear it."[163]

Within a year of its founding, the original membership of the Browning Society had doubled. Many women had joined, including such active and enterprising members as Emily Hickey, the cofounder; Frances Buss; Eleanor Marx; Mrs. Orr; Mrs. Ireland; and "pious old ladies" whose subscriptions, George Bernard Shaw said, kept the society going. The plan of the New Shakspere Society to promote the organization of branch societies wherever possible was followed by the Browning Society with a great deal of success. The first report of the Browning Society committee exclaims that the society "*has* encouraged, nay, caused the formation of Browning Societies and Browning Reading-Clubs at Oxford, Cambridge, Girton, Newnham,

[162]Letter from Robert Browning to George Smith, January 1, 1884, quoted in Peterson, *Browning's Trumpeter*, p. 87n. 1.

[163]British Library, Ashley "A" MS 2549 1:134, fol. 77.

Bradford, Cheltenham and Philadelphia."[164] According to E. F. Benson, young ladies of the Newnham College Browning Society invited the poet to have tea and muffins with them, and after he read one of his poems, they placed a crown of pink roses on his white head.[165] In the second report, dated July 6, 1883, under the heading "General Notes on Local Societies," it is reported that at Burnley "Mr. Sagar, the *Hon. Sec.*, has read . . . three or four of Browning's poems before the Burnley Literary and Scientific Club, and has read papers on *James Lee's Wife* and *Fears and Scruples*. He has also had many private readings with friends at his house."[166] In the United States, Hiram Corson, of Cornell University, had been "indefatigable in Browning work." He had lectured in Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Syracuse, New York, and his lectures had led to the founding of various clubs for the study of Browning's works.[167] In that section of the report, however, there is no mention of the "Browning craze" in the United States, where "ladies wearing brown, in a room decorated with brown curtains, served brown bread on brown china from a brown tablecloth—to the uncontrollable delight of the press."[168]

When one considers the state of English studies at Cambridge in the 1880's, the following unsigned notice in the *Academy* (1881) is particularly interesting:

> The preliminary meeting of the Cambridge Browning Society is to be held at Mr. Bradshaw's rooms, at King's, on the evening of Friday, November 11. . . . a paper will be read on "Browning as a Poet," by Dr. Charles Waldstein; and the Society will then be formally organized. The intention is to develop the society into one for the more thorough study and deeper appreciation of modern literature, making Browning, as *the* representative modern England poet, the centre of the Society's work.[169]

[164]"First Report of the Browning Society Committee," *Browning Society Papers* 1 (1881-84): Appendix, p. i.

[165]E. F. Benson, *As We Were*, p. 142.

[166]*Browning Society Papers* 1 (1881-84), Appendix, p. xiv.

[167]Ibid. The activities of societies at Bradford, Cheltenham, and Oxford are also described in this report.

[168]Irvine and Honan, *The Book, the Ring and the Poet*, p. 503.

[169]*Academy* 20 (November, 1881):345. In July, 1882, "The Browning Society Committee were gratified that at the late conferment of the degree of D.C.L. on Robert Browning at Oxford, a Regius Professor, Prof. Bryce, M.P., the mouthpiece of the University, made allusion to the Societies established to study and interpret his (Browning's) poetry, an honour never before paid to a poet in his life-time. (*Oxford University Herald* June 17, 1882)."

Another Browning Society at Cambridge did not fare as well. A correspondent from Girton College informed Furnivall in 1886 of the circumstances of the winding up of the Girton Browning Society, founded in 1882. Furnivall wrote in the *Academy* that "the Girton girls have proved faithless to Mr. Browning. They have formally dissolved their Browning Society, and not only voted that the balance of funds in hand should be spent in chocolates, but have actually bought the chocolates and eaten them."[170] Girton College, Cambridge University's new women's college, drew most of its students from the schools of the two stalwart headmistresses, Frances Buss and Dorothea Beale, who were education reformers and members of the Browning Society. The real explanation for the closure of the society at Girton was that the purchase of Browning's works for the college library, the main reason for forming the society, had been completed. Writers in periodicals, however, chose to use the closure to ridicule both the Browning Society and higher education for women.[171]

Entertainments and the performance of Browning's plays referred to in the first report of the society's committee were really sidelines of the society's work: "It [the Society] *has* procured the acting of *Colombe's Birthday* and the promise of another play's performance in the provinces next autumn; and it has given one of its own Extra Meetings to a successful set of Readings, Recitations, and Browning songs."[172] The other plays were *In a Balcony, A Blot in the Scutcheon,* and *Strafford. In a Balcony* was performed at Princes' Hall, Piccadilly on November 28, 1884, as part of the society's "Fourth Entertainment," and *A Blot in the Scutcheon* was produced by Charles Fry[173] under the auspices

"First Report of the Browning Society Committee," *Browning Society Papers* 1 (1881-84); Appendix, p. ii.

[170]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. lxviii. "The climax came when *Funny Folks*, on March 27, 1888, pictorially commemorated the affair. A procession of three learned-looking ladies, eating chocolate, is seen emerging from a sweet-shop, while lachrymose Browning stands and ruefully regards them." Ibid.

[171]See *Punch* 90 (April 17, 1886): 186; *Funny Folks* 12 (March 27, 1886): 96; *Journal of Education* n.s. 8 (May 1, 1886): 207-208; *Echo*, April 3, 1886, p. 2; *Academy* 29 (April, 1886): 236.

[172]*Browning Society Papers* 1 (1881-84), Appendix, p. i.

[173]Fry was professional stage manager of the Irving Dramatic Club. Concerning the production of *Blot in the Scutcheon* and the actor Macready, see Wilson Archer, *William Charles Macready*, p. 136. *The Return of the Druses* was given a dramatic reading by the society in the Botanical Theatre, University College, on November 26, 1891.

of the Browning and New Shakspere societies at St. George's Hall on April 30 and May 2, 1885. Browning was consulted on the performance of the latter play and was persuaded to attend it on the understanding that his identity would be kept secret. After the performance Browning wrote to Furnivall: "Before I go to bed I must tell you how more than pleased I was with the play this evening: all was done capitally—all that was requisite for getting a fair judgement of the thing."[174] The last of these dramatic performances was given in 1888, after which the society decided that play production was too costly, especially since it had more urgent commitments.

The production of *Strafford* in December, 1886, led to yet another row that had Furnivall at its center and attracted more attention than the performance itself. The trouble started when Leonard Outram, the leading actor and director of the play, pleaded poverty and sent out a circular asking members of the society for a subscription for his benefit. Outraged at what he regarded as sheer self-seeking, Furnivall dashed off angry postcards in every direction and wrote inflammatory letters about Outram to the press. The actor brought a libel suit against Furnivall and at a trial on February 2, 1888, was awarded £100 for damages. It was a blow to Furnivall, but Justice Fitzjames Stephen observed that by his conduct in the witness box Furnivall "had turned a mere friction into a serious matter." In his outspoken fashion Furnivall had declared in court: "I did intend to make it hot for the plaintiff among my own set. . . . I cannot say that I feel any regret for what I did in this matter."[175] The court's decision was not surprising. Furnivall had practically repeated the libel, and the judge simply refused to believe Furnivall's altruistic motives when the latter claimed that society members were expected to give unselfish service with no "sordid motives." Justice Stephen's reply was "I would not believe a man on his oath who said he cared nothing for himself or his own advancement. It is contrary to Nature and common sense."[176] On

[174]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. lxvii. Furnivall had the Lyceum Theatre in mind for one of the plays, but was told in a letter from Sir Henry Irving that " 'Faust' takes up the stage at the Lyceum." Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 436, November, 1885.

[175]Peterson, *Interrogating the Oracle*, p. 45. See also William S. Peterson "Outram v. Furnivall," *Bulletin of New York Public Library*, February, 1967, pp. 93–104.

[176]Peterson, *Interrogating the Oracle*, p. 46. Furnivall was involved in a copyright action brought by Edward Abbott Parry against Alexander Moring and Israel Gollancz and heard on

February 25, 1888, Browning described the case to his son, Pen, and Pen's wife, Fannie: "He had only to say, in the witness box, 'I was indignant, as who could help being? but I used hasty language which I now find was improper'—instead of which he repeated it more offensively than at first. His friends understand this, and are coming generously forward."[177]

The manner in which Furnivall's friends rallied to help him was one of the most impressive aspects of the case. Many letters of support and comfort can be found in the Furnivall Papers, in King's College Library, London, and a Furnivall Fund was set up by Walter Slater and Dykes Campbell to collect the more than £300 damages and legal fees which everyone knew Furnivall could not pay. On March 2, 1888, James Russell Lowell wrote to Campbell from the United States:

> I have seen your letter *in re* Furnivall & am much moved by it. I do not know the facts of the case, . . . but I do know that our friend can ill afford to pay £250 & that chiefly because he has devoted himself unselfishly and unflinchingly to the interests of scholarship & of other people. No living man has done so much as he to promote the intelligent study of our language by supplying us with the necessary material.[178]

Related to the play performances were lectures, talks, and Browning readings that society members gave throughout the country. Some, like Furnivall, Emily Hickey, and William Kingsland, a proofreader, had been doing this for some time, but the practice became far more popular in 1885, after Furnivall suggested at a society meeting that members give lectures on Browning's works to their neighbors in their own localities. Berdoe, Catherine Whitehead, Edward Gonner, and others agreed to do so, and a committee was set up to supervise the effort. Berdoe boasted in 1888 that he had lectured on Browning at South Place (Chapel) because the announced professor was ill: "It was a difficult time, but I wrote an entirely new lecture of an hour's

April 3, 1903, regarding Parry's *The Letters from Dorothy Osborne to Sir William Temple*. See Bodleian Library, Parry v. Moring and Furnivall Correspondence. On a postcard, dated May 5, 1903, to Parry about the Osbornes, Furnivall has written over a printed notice of Philological Society meetings. For his articles in support of Moring and Gollancz see *Times* (London), April 11, 13, 15, 17, 21, 1903. See also *Notes and Queries* 9th ser. 12 (1903): 128, 348.

[177]Peterson, *Interrogating the Oracle*, pp. 47–48.

[178]British Library, Add. MS 49525.

reciting—on 'The Religion of Browning.' *An appreciative and large audience.*"[179] On February 6, 1886, the *Academy* reported that a committee had been appointed by the Browning Society to set up a series of Browning lectures and recitations for the benefit of audiences "in or near London, private or public."[180] The following undated letter to Furnivall comments on a lecture he gave in Hackney:

> Your lecture was capital & you cd. see suited the audience well. As an introduction to Browning I think it was about as good as could be, & has certainly kindled the interests of several in his works. Some have been to see about how to buy the selections, & others borrowing. . . . I don't think you shd. discard any of the readings from Mrs. Browning. . . . As to the Theology my own impression is that it was not a mistake to let it well alone in such a lecture. First because your time was well filled by more engaging matter. Second because fairness to his theology wd. mean too much space occupied by that aspect of him.
>
> Will you further permit me to suggest that at some points there was a successive rapidity of utterance, phrases being lost, & especially the names of the poems.[181]

Hickey, who worked at times in the London slums, and Kingsland, who lectured to societies largely composed of working men, agreed strongly with Furnivall that Browning's poetry was as good a means as any of releasing the working classes from their industrial bondage. Berdoe was thoroughly sincere when he called the Browning Society a "first-rate missionary society." He saw it as an agency that had done much to introduce moral ideas and precepts to the inhabitants of the East End.

Like the Working Men's College, the society had its setbacks. On one occasion Mrs. Ireland lectured at Toynbee Hall on "The Spiritual Teaching of Robert Browning" to an audience of workers and had to field so many perceptive but awkward questions about Browning's religious views and lack of poetic clarity that she was forced to lecture on a different subject on her next visit.

[179]Peterson, *Interrogating the Oracle*, pp. 161-62.

[180]*Academy* 29 (January, 1886): 92. An entry in A. J. Munby's diaries reads: "Wednesday, 22 February, 1882, . . . by 7.30, to F. J. Furnivall, St. George's Square, Primrose Hill, and took part in reading of Browning's Strafford." Derek Hudson, *Arthur J. Munby: Man of Two Worlds*, p. 404.

[181]King's College Library, Furnivall Papers.

Besides the plays, readings, and lectures, musical concerts were arranged, and Browning's songs were set to music by Sir Charles Villiers Stanford, Ethel Harroden Glover, Cecile Hartog, Edwin Bending, and others. In 1884, Ethel Harraden became one of the composers at Furnivall's request.[182] In *A Volume of Personal Record* she describes her meeting with Browning:

> And one Sunday afternoon . . . Dr. Furnivall took me to see the great poet, and I had the honour of singing the song ("James Lee's Wife") to him. . . . I remember that he appeared to be greatly gratified at hearing of the doings of the Browning Society, and most appreciative of Dr. Furnivall's eager services on his behalf.[183]

Arthur Symons, poet, critic, and editor of the *Savoy*, met at the Browning Society important literary men who were to help him in his career. According to W. S. Peterson, Furnivall was "at least partially responsible for Symons's initial introduction to the larger world of London." Symons began writing to Furnivall in the early 1880s, and the latter, "with characteristic generosity and impulsiveness, assigned the inexperienced Symons the task of writing the introduction to the facsimile edition of the First Quarto *Venus and Adonis* (1885)."[184] Two years later, in August, 1887, Symons met Furnivall for the first time and spent a day in the country with him. Symons records this meeting: "We chatted of innumerable things, & his graphic anecdotes have quite set me up in current biography. Of Meredith he has some capital tales, & of course of Browning. . . . I was immensely entertained with him, & pleased even beyond my anticipations."[185] According to Peterson, when Furnivall read Symons's first volume of verse, *Days and Nights* (1889), he

[182]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. 65. Ethel Glover writes, "Dr. Furnivall's activity in this matter testifies to his remarkable power of throwing himself into a strange set of circumstances; for he was really not at all musical, and we often teased him about it in our family circle." Ibid., p. 67. About the same time (1884), the New Shakspere Society held musical entertainments at University College. At the second annual musical evening, on May 9, 1884, songs from Shakespeare were sung under the direction of James Greenhill in the Botany Theatre at the college. The words of the songs were edited by Furnivall and W. G. Stone. J. Greenhill, W. A. Harrison, and F. J. Furnivall, *A List of Shakspere's Songs and Passages that have been set to Music* (1884).

[183]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. 66.

[184]"Arthur Symons as a Browningite," *Review of English Studies* n.s. 19 (1968): 148.

[185]Ibid.

expressed his disapproval of it; Furnivall's warmth and helpfulness to young writers were exceeded only by the bluntness with which he expressed his views. Yet Symons could observe on another occasion, with perfect truthfulness, that "No one, I am sure, is so indebted to Dr. F. as I am—in an infinitude of ways."[186]

During the society's first seven years the membership increased to around 250. From the start there had been some disagreement about how long it should continue in existence. In 1883, Mrs. Orr suggested it should be closed in 1888, but Furnivall opposed this and was supported in his stand.[187] Again in 1888, Gonner moved (and was seconded by Shaw) that the society be dissolved because of its lack of critical aim, its missionary character, and its growing preoccupation with theological matters. Furnivall, as usual, was at the center of the stormy discussion that followed and in characteristic form declared that "the society should not be wound up, and that this meeting should say distinctly that the time had not even come for asking members' opinion about it."[188] The upshot of the controversy was the decision that the society henceforth should concentrate on critical work.

The trouble with this suggestion was that few members had the critical equipment to deal with the poetry or to carry out the society's stated purpose: "to discuss and elucidate Browning's works." Most members were content to search for moral uplift and guidance in the poems and to repeat what amounted to the society's slogan: "Browning was obscure, but rewarding." And the evangelical zeal of a Beale or a Kingsland[189] was unlikely to be redirected and transferred to serious literary criticism by any society motion. Beale, principal of Cheltenham Ladies' College, told Furnivall that "she turned to Browning all buoyant with faith and hope, and found in him the very thing that uplifted her above the sense of failure, and encouraged her in all her work."[190] She was always accompanied at society meetings by her

[186]Ibid. For Symons's reply to Furnivall's criticism, see Roger Lhombreaud, *Arthur Symons*, p. 55.

[187]Mrs. Orr's action may explain why Furnivall spoke so disagreeably about her *Handbook* when it was published in 1885. See Peterson, *Browning's Trumpeter*, p. 124n.

[188]*Browning Society Papers* 1 (1881–84), pt. 4, Appendix, p. 83.

[189]Kingsland reported, often unsatisfactorily, the proceedings of the meetings. He frequently gave private Browning readings and public lectures on Browning's poetry.

[190]Josephine Kamm, *How Different from Us: A Biography of Miss Buss and Miss Beale*, p. 105.

fellow pioneer in higher education for women, Frances Buss, principal of the North London Collegiate School for Girls. Hickey taught English Language and Literature at the North London Collegiate School for Girls for eighteen years. After her introduction to Furnivall (she read a paper on *Measure for Measure* to the New Shakspere Society) she gave lectures on Shakespeare, under Furnivall's direction, to many literary groups.

In 1889, membership fell sharply, according to the eighth annual report of the Browning Society's committee,[191] and despite a reawakening of interest in Browning's work after his death in December of that year, it became clear that the society was finished. In 1891, it was decided to discontinue operations, and although Thomas Wise called for outstanding fees from former members in an attempt to publish a Browning bibliography, a collection of letters and part 6 of the *Papers*, there was no response, and the society was never even formally closed. A column by Furnivall in the *Westminster Gazette* of February 24, 1983, states that, although the society had stopped its regular meetings at University College, informal ones would be held in the homes of members and friends and that songs and recitations would be added to the usual papers and discussions. The March meeting was to be held in a Mrs. Defries's house, and the April meeting at Hall Griffin's.[192]

There can be little doubt about the value of the society's work. Despite the critics' harsh pronouncements, it more than justified its existence. Books, essays, a bibliography, annotated and improved texts, and productions of the plays were the direct result of the society's efforts, and its counterparts spread to many corners of the English-speaking world.[193] Some of these Browning societies are still active in

[191]*Browning Society Papers* 1 (1881–84), pt. 1, p. xxxiii.

[192]On May 7, 1901, Furnivall wrote the following letter in support of Hall Griffin: "I strongly recommend Prof. Hall Griffin for the English Professorship at Bedford College. I think him the best available man. As a student he won the Early English Text Society's prize for English before Chaucer two years running. He has workt then most of the Anglo-Saxon & earliest English Texts with their MSS. & has taught them continually for the last fifteen years. His edition of Austin Dobsin's Handbook is used as a text book at Marburg and Leipsig & shows familiarity with the latest results of modern scholarship. Prof. Griffin has also studied & taught Gothic & Icelandic & I think him so competent in Middle English that I have askt him to re-edit the difficult Early Poems of Edward I's time in the Harleian MS. 4253 for the Early English Text Society." British Library, Add. MS 45563, fol. 133.

[193]In 1889, Helen Clarke and Charlotte Porter, two American Browningites, founded

several cities, including New York; Independence, Missouri; and Hollywood, California.

Browning was the first to acknowledge the debt he owed to the society's founders and members. Writing to J. T. Nettleship in 1889, he said:

> If Johnson showed his good sense in telling somebody who deprecated the appearance of an adverse criticism on something he had just brought out, "Sir, if the critics did not notice me, I should starve"—well, I am justified in fancying that, but for what was done by Furnivall and his colleagues, I should have no more readers than ten years ago.[194]

In 1884, Germany conferred on Furnivall its "proudest academic distinction," as Schick called it, the doctor of philosophy of Berlin University. Zupitza was the means of obtaining the degree. Furnivall's first democratic impulse, as one would expect, was to retain the English "Mr.," but after his German benefactors suggested that such an action might suggest ingratitude, he agreed to use the title "Dr." Furnivall wrote to C. H. Pearson: "...on my 60th birthday, Feb. 4, Berlin sent me an Hon. 'Ph.D.' So I've had to stick Dr. on to my name. It is a joke. Probably due to my having rowd stroke to the Scratch Four in our Maurice Rowing Club last Octr., & won both heats. This tickled people."[195] A letter from Browning to congratulate Furnivall on his degree (and his birthday)[196] is further evidence of his high regard for "the Doctor," as he became familiarly known.

Browning was willing to help the society from time to time by giving general information about the poems or clarifying vague passages. Notes printed anonymously in the *Transactions* of the society were usually written by him or were based on information supplied by him. Sometimes, to the delight of the society, he recounted the circumstances of composition, and sometimes he read manuscripts of essays before they went to the printer. Thanks to Furnivall's constant questioning about problems of interpretation, some of Browning's

*Poet-Lore*, which to begin with served as a kind of newsletter for Browning and Shakespeare societies in America.

[194]Griffin and Minchin, *Life of Browning*, p. 270. See also Browning's letter to Edmund Yates, ibid., pp. 269–70.

[195]Bodleian Library, MS letter d. 187, fol. 208.

[196]Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 126.

letters to him contain valuable information about his poetry. A letter concerning *The Ring and the Book*, quoted *in toto* by Munro, is an excellent example of such explication.[197] In a letter the poet wrote to Furnivall from Isere on September 15, 1881, he promised: ". . . if on consideration I properly am able, I will give you a list of the true names of men, things and place in 'Red Cotton Night-Cap Country'—It is only just that I should do the little I can to show I am sensible of the favours done me—sensible I *am*."[198]

At times Browning was embarrassed by the activities of some of the more officious, patronizing supporters of the society, and he often entertained the company at Leslie Stephen's by describing how he was chased around the Albert Memorial by a pack of foreign sightseers. Yet, of course, the membership was not confined to "foolish virgins," gushing admirers, and riddle-solving "Browningites."[199] Such diverse characters as Shaw, Augustine Birrell, James Lecky, and Karl Marx's daughter Eleanor were very active members, and a galaxy of distinguished scholars regularly gave papers at the society's meetings. These and many other members were far removed from the idolatrous Browningites that literary historians and biographers delight in describing. Vigorous criticism was as common as adulation. In the *Star*, Shaw wrote that "Dr. Berdoe disputed with Dr. F. J. Furnivall the distinction of being the 'fightingest' member of the Browning Society, which is probably the most pugnacious body of its size in existence."[200] At the end of one of his own papers Shaw said that he was sorry if his "remarks had been almost uniformly abusive, and could only say that the writer of the paper [to which Shaw's paper was a reply] richly deserved it."

The society's activities were widely reported in the periodicals of the time. *Notes and Queries* commented in 1882: "This society is thoroughly justifying its existence. It will be impossible for any future writer upon Browning to neglect its labours—if indeed, it does not

[197]Munro, *Furnivall*, pp. lxx-lxxi. See Peterson, *Browning's Trumpeter*.

[198]British Library, Ashley "B" MS 2551, fol. 125. See also Thomas J. Wise, ed., *Letters from Robert Browning to Various Correspondents*, 1:66-98; 2:3-51, 54-56, 59-79, 88-98; W. C. De Vane and K. L. Knickerbocker, eds. *New Letters of Robert Browning*; Thurman L. Hood, ed., *Letters of Robert Browning*.

[199]*Saturday Review* 58 (December, 1884): 721-22.

[200]*Star*, October, 1888, reprinted in *Browning Society Papers* 2 (1888): 296.

make any further writing upon the subject entirely superfluous."[201] The sale of Browning's poetry soared as a direct result of these labors. According to the *Academy*, one thousand copies of a six-volume edition of Browning's *Poetical Works* published in 1868 were sold in 1885.[202] For many persons such popularity gave him ascendancy over all his contemporaries, including even Tennyson. Although a poll conducted by the *Journal of Education* among its readers in 1883 placed Browning fourth (after Tennyson, Ruskin and Matthew Arnold) among the ten greatest living English writers, Gerard Manley Hopkins, who was not a Browning devotee, noted in 1884 that Browning had won a popularity poll in the *Spectator*.[203] Books on Browning multiplied, and preachers used his poems as moral exemplars. Public lectures, readings, and talks became frequent and widespread, and were not confined to branch societies. In the United States even Mark Twain gave regular readings from Browning.[204]

Furnivall, of course, never ceased to eulogize Browning. W. S. Peterson writes that on January 31, 1890, at the first meeting of the Browning Society after Browning's death, Furnivall read a formal statement of the society's sorrow which he himself had written, though he added that the sentiments had first been expressed by "Mr. Arthur Symons, . . . a younger and more eloquent writer than myself," but that the draft had been accidentally misplaced.[205]

Although the Browning Society was never taken very seriously by the public,[206] its contribution to Browning studies is very clear: it has

[201]*Notes and Queries* 5 (May, 1882): 360.

[202]*Academy* 29 (February, 1886): 110. Furnivall usually wrote the reports of the Society's activities that appeared regularly in the "Notes and News" column of the *Academy*.

[203]C. C. Abbott, ed., *Further Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, p. 349. Oscar Wilde solemnly told Browning to ignore the adulation of the Browning Society and apply himself to the true task of the poet: ". . . to stir the pulses of (a) man or woman, or create a desire to lead a higher, a holier, and a more useful life in the breast of the indifferent average citizen." Stewart Mason, *Bibliography of Oscar Wilde*, p. 148.

[204]The *Academy* reported in 1886: "The Chicago papers are full of 'the Browning craze,' as they call it. The chief bookseller in the city says that, during the last twelve months, he has sold more copies of Browning than 'of any other poet living or dead.' " *Academy* 29 (March, 1886): 182. At this time there were six Browning societies or reading clubs in the city.

[205]"Arthur Symons as a Browningite," *Review of English Studies* n.s. 29 (1968): 155-56.

[206]*Punch* once came out with a parody of the society's meetings in which a new member suggests that they close one meeting by playing a game of blind man's buff. *Punch* 84 (August, 1883): 192.

exerted a powerful influence on twentieth-century Browning scholarship, and the unique value of the society's annotation and explication of Browning's poems, frequently with the help of the poet himself, was conceded even by the "anti-Browningites." Charles M. Hancher claims that "the Browning Society and its members elicited from Browning a body of information and critical comment about his works so large as to be without precedent in the history of English literature."[207]

By publishing an inexpensive edition of the poetry, as well as a primer and arguments to accompany the poems, Furnivall and the society were not just providing for the moral uplift of the working class, as Peterson suggests.[208] They were also making available for students of English a text that would normally be beyond their financial means. One of Furnivall's chief aims in life was to help the greatest number of people to a wider knowledge of literature, and the provision of inexpensive texts to students and workers was something about which he naturally felt very strongly.[209] He was obviously delighted to report that "in the first year of the publication of the shilling selection from Browning's works, no fewer than 60,000 copies were sold."[210]

The Shelley Society, which Furnivall founded in 1886, was very similar in aims and methods to the Browning Society.[211] Most of its published work formed a valuable series of textual reprints from early editions and manuscripts. From all accounts it was Henry Sweet who gave Furnivall the idea of forming the society. On December 6, 1885, at the end of one of their customary Sunday walks, when Sweet asked Furnivall why he had not founded a Shelley Society, "Furnivall saw no good reason why it should not be established and several good reasons why it should be."[212] With his customary minuteness of detail and impetuosity Furnivall "resolved to found the Shelley Society—on the hill between Hendon and Hampstead, on Sunday, December 6, about

[207]Hancher, "The London Browning Society," p. 39.

[208]Peterson, *Interrogating the Oracle*, pp. 189-90.

[209]He refers to it in many of his societies' reports.

[210]*Great Thoughts from Master Minds*, 8:90.

[211]The Shelley Society also shared many of its members and leaders with the Browning Society.

[212]*Shelley Society Papers* (1887), pt. 1, Appendix, pp. 3-4.

1:30 P.M."[213] Furnivall told Shaw about his decision. In a letter to William Archer, critic of the *World*, on December 12, 1885, Shaw writes: "Furnivall has just revealed the Shelley Society to me. I thought it would be a tip; but have seen it in yesterday's P.M. [Pall Mall Gazette]!"[214]

At the first annual general meeting of the society on Wednesday, January 26, 1887, at University College, London, 400 members attended. The prospectus reads:

> The first object of the Society will be the publication *in exact facsimile* of those original editions of Shelley's works which, from their excessive scarcity and consequent prohibitive prices are practically unprocurable. In addition to these the Society will issue reprints of early Notices and criticisms upon Shelley, some of which are extremely rare, whilst others, being buried in old and forgotten periodical literature, are very difficult of access. . . . The Society therefore appeals with confidence to those who now exercise so powerful an influence upon the national education, for support in the endeavour to promote an intelligent and general study of the writings of one who ranks among the first of English poets.[215]

The first secretary of the society was Sydney E. Preston, a young lawyer enlisted by Furnivall; the second was Stanley Little; and the last was Thomas J. Wise, the bibliographer, who had also been secretary of the Browning Society. In 1888 the society's committee was made up of such illustrious members as Shaw, Napier, Sweet, Mathilde Blind, H. S. Salt, H. Buxton Forman, Bertram Dobell, and Stopford Brooke.

The publications of the Shelley Society[216] followed the arrangement of those of the New Shakspere Society, in a serial division, but this time in four parts: series 1, papers read before the society and reports of the discussions at its meetings; series 2, facsimile reprints of all the rarest short works of Shelley, with full biographical notices; series 3, reprints of the most important magazine articles on Shelley and his works (biographical and critical, contemporary and recent);

[213]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. lxxiii.

[214]D. H. Laurence, ed., *George Bernard Shaw: Collected Letters, 1874-1897*, p. 146.

[215]The *Shelley Society Prospectus*.

[216]For more information about early publication plans see *Academy* 29 (March, 1886): 165.

series 4, miscellaneous category including an edition of *The Cenci* for the society's performance of the play, *Shelley's Autobiography*, and *A Shelley Primer*.[217] In series 1 was published Stopford Brooke's inaugural address to the society in which "Mr. Matthew Arnold's perverse *dicta* on Shelley were convincingly proved to have no ground, in fact, reason, or taste."[218] The second series contained some volumes which were not facsimiles (for example, Shelley's review of Thomas Jefferson Hogg's *Memoirs of Prince Alexy Haimatoff*), while no volumes were published in the third series, and an extra series was instituted to speed up production of volumes which could be published at once from available society funds.[219]

Furnivall himself did none of the editorial work of the Shelley Society. Wise was by far the most productive in the second series, and other editors included Dowden, Bertram Dobell, Buxton Forman, T. W. Rolleston, and Brooke.[220] Among papers read to the society during its first year were Forman's paper "The Vicissitudes of Queen Mab," Blind's "Shelley's View of Nature Contrasted with Darwin's," William M. Rossetti's "Study of *Prometheus Unbound*," and a paper by F. J. Maynard, of St. John's College, Oxford, "The Religion of Shelley." Shaw regularly attended the meetings and constantly enlivened the proceedings with his discussions. On Wednesday, April 17, 1886, the *Academy* reported that, in the discussions that followed Buxton Forman's lecture on "The Visissitudes of Queen Mab,"

[217]In March, 1886, *Academy* reports that "Mr. H. S. Salt, a former Fellow of King's College, Cambridge, and under-master at Eton, has undertaken to write the 'Shelley Primer,' which Messrs. Reeves & Turner will publish. The Shelley Society will issue a copy of the book to each of its members," *Academy* 29 (March, 1886): 200. A letter from Henry Salt to Thomas Wise on January 18, 1888, reads: "Will you be sending round to the members of the Shelley Society any circular or 'notebook'? And if so, would you be able to enclose with each a leaflet notice of a book on Shelley which I am just about to publish? . . . The book in question is a biographical essay on Shelley, with some reprinted articles as an Appendix." British Library, Ashley "B" MS 1648, 5:137.

[218]*Shelley Society Papers* (1887), pt. 1, Appendix, p. 8. A detailed list of proposed publications for all four series is given in *The Shelley Society Prospectus*.

[219]In March, 1886, the *Academy*, referring to the *Shelley Society Notebook*, the supplement to the *Papers*, reports: "It is to contain, besides the reports of the society's meetings, 'Shelleyana' of all kinds, and the editor, S. E. Preston has received for the first number, 'interesting communications from Mr. F. S. Ellis, Mr. W. M. Rossetti, Dr. Furnivall and other members of the society, with some good queries and answers.' " *Academy* 29 (March, 1886): 218.

[220]Ibid., p. 314.

"Dr. Garnett, Mr. G. B. Shaw, Dr. Aveling, Dr. Furnivall and the Rev. W. A. Harrison were the chief speakers."[221]

Over a period of six years, 1886 to 1892, the Shelley Society put together a large body of material—biography, bibliography, and criticism—which was of immense value to Shelley students, though the society failed to generate the public interest in his work that had been anticipated. Outside the actual texts the publications were not of outstanding importance. For instance, F. S. Ellis's *Alphabetical Table of Contents to Shelley's Poetical Works* (1888) or Henry Stephen's *Shelley Primer* (1887) could scarcely compare with William Rossetti's *Memoir of Shelley* or Browning's *Essay on Percy Bysshe Shelley*, which were not originally issued for the society.[222] The somewhat irregular and confusing publication arrangements[223] helped confine the benefits of the society's work to the members rather than to the reading public at large.

In *Shelleyan Ideas in Victorian Literature*, Roland Duerksen perhaps indirectly supplies another reason for the precarious state of the Shelley Society. He sees the society as "in one respect representative of the situation in which Victorian followers of Shelley found themselves," and he quotes explorer Sir Henry M. Stanley's words to one of the society's officers:

> You are a funny people, you Shelleyites; you are playing—at a safe distance yourselves, maybe—with fire. In spreading Shelley you are indirectly helping to stir up the great socialist question which bids fair to swamp you all for a bit.[224]

Thus to be a supporter of Shelley's social views in Victorian England was to break all ties with the *status quo*. Edward Aveling and Eleanor Marx were, of course, delighted to have done that, and in a paper entitled "Shelley and Socialism" that they read to the Shelley Society on December 14, 1887, they declared that Shelley was their Socialist

[221]See Laurence, ed., *George Bernard Shaw*, p. 353, for Shaw's account of a society meeting in the East End at which Furnivall was principal speaker.

[222]F. S. Ellis's *A Lexical Concordance to the Poetical Works of P. B. Shelley* was, however, a valuable contribution to Shelley bibliography. See *Academy* 29 (April, 1886): 272.

[223]See Sylva Norman, *Flight of the Skylark*, p. 272n., for Shaw's complaint about the inaccuracies of the society's reporting.

[224]Ronald Duerksen, *Shelleyan Ideas in Victorian Literature*, p. 27.

brother. They supported that claim by quoting Karl Marx's statement that Shelley "was essentially a revolutionist and he would always have been one of the advanced guard of socialism."[225] Aveling, the brilliant but unpleasant Socialist, was refused membership of the Shelley Society in 1886 mainly because, although married, he was living with Eleanor Marx. William Rossetti, who saw the irony of such a ruling, resigned from the society's committee. He explained to Furnivall later that "on the same grounds the Shelley Soc[iet]y w[oul]d have turned out Shelley himself."[226] The following account of this incident is given by Yvonne Kapp in her biography of Eleanor Marx:

> "There was sad trouble . . . when Dr. Aveling applied for membership, for the majority decided to refuse it—his marriage relations being similar to Shelley's—and it was only by the determined action of the Chairman, Mr. W. M. Rossetti, who threatened to resign, . . . that the difficulty was surmounted," wrote Henry Salt who thereupon proposed that the name be changed to the "Respectable Society."[227]

In a letter on this subject to Furnivall (which Furnivall edited), Rossetti writes: "To me it appears perfectly possible that A., once excluded, will decline to come in; & that w$^{d}$ create (or continue. F. J. F.) for the Committee such a position (so I regard it) of anti-Shelleyism that my original reason for resigning w$^{d}$ remain in full force."[228]

More colorful, and possibly more influential in popularizing Shelley than the publications and papers were the society's performances of his plays. One of the earliest projects of the Shelley Society was a dramatic production of *The Cenci*, which had been banned by the censor in the interests of national morality. It was Furnivall who conceived the idea of the performance, and a detailed account of the entire staging of the play is given in *The Shelley Society Notebook* (1886).[229] Many years before, Browning had approached Charles John Kean, Edmund Kean's son, to put on the play, and William

[225]*Shelley Society Publications*, 1st ser., no. 1, pt. 2.

[226]British Library, Ashley MS 1449, fol. 15–17, letter, March 8, 1887.

[227]Yvonne Kapp, *Eleanor Marx*, 2:250.

[228]Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 767, letter dated March 11, 1887.

[229]*Shelley Society Notebook*, May 8, 1886, p. 59.

Macready and Samuel Phelps had also considered producing it. Where they had held back, Furnivall went fearlessly ahead, though he was "unhesitatingly refused" a license for a public performance by this Lord Chamberlain, and *The Cenci* was privately produced at the Grand Theatre on May 7, 1886, before Shelleyites and invited guests. Hermann Vezin played the count, and Alma Murray, Beatrice. The "brilliant" audience, "so large as to fill the house from floor to ceiling," included many "persons of high literary celebrity." On May 5, 1886, Shaw wrote to Furnivall:

> Dear Dr. Furnivall,
>
> In case I should not see you at the Museum today, I write to say that if you know of any spare tickets for the Cenci, I am a deserving man much in want of them. Preston sent me two balcony and two amphitheatre; but they are gone like smoke, and I want one for myself and two for my mother and sister (who has professional claims as a young actress, save the mark). Is there not a stall for so eminent a critic as
>
> Yours unreasonably,
> G. Bernard Shaw[230]

Thomas J. Wise helped with the seating of the audience ("a harmless, almost a pastoral employment for the villain"),[231] which included Oscar Wilde, H. Rider Haggard, Browning (whose seventy-fourth birthday it was), and James Russell Lowell.[232] Those who declined to attend included Tennyson, Matthew Arnold, Gladstone, Swinburne, and Sir Percy and Lady Shelley. Some have claimed that the Shelleys would have nothing to do with the theatrical presentations, but that is not the case. In a letter to Furnivall on May 15, 1886, Sir Percy arranges to call on Furnivall because there is an outbreak of measles in the Shelley house, and he refers to "the very perfect way in which Mr.

[230]Laurence, ed., *George Bernard Shaw*, p. 155. On October 20, 1886, Shaw wrote to Alma Murray: "Dr. Furnivall recommended you this afternoon to read a book of mine (*Cashel Byron's Profession*)—a shilling shocker—and, in the author's presence, you could not refuse without absolute barbarity. . . . But I feel that people must not be forced to adopt me as their favourite author, even for their own good; and it struck me that Dr. Furnivall hardly respected your right to choose your own books." Ibid., p. 161.

[231]Norman, *Flight of the Skylark*, p. 272. For an account of Wise's typographical forgeries, see Wilfred Partington, *Thomas J. Wise in the Original Cloth*; John Carter and Graham Pollard, *An Enquiry into the Nature of Certain 19th Century Pamphlets*.

[232]British Library, Ashley "B" MS 4141, fol. 48.

Radolpho de Cardova placed the tragedy on the stage."[233] A later letter from Sir Percy to Furnivall, on November 7, 1886, reads:

> I regret that neither Lady Shelley nor myself are able to go to London at present—and that we shall therefore not be present at the representation of *Hellas*. . . . I hope the critics of the audience will be pleased with the setting. I will send £2 towards the expenses.[234]

The Shelley Society could not have given itself more publicity. Drama critics were in a state of frenzy. Reviews ranged from the following, in the *Scotsman:*

> *The Cenci* . . . turns on an incident so terrible, so revolting and so utterly obscene . . . it seems a thousand pities it should ever have been presented in public.

to this, in the *Saturday Review:*

> The Shelley Society did well to give a performance of *The Cenci*. Societies do not often give us an opportunity of judging how far the work of a great poet deserves its reputation.[235]

With regard to the play's dramatic validity, perhaps the *Daily Telegraph* was the most candid when it claimed that

> four long hours of a lovely May afternoon were yesterday occupied by the Shelley Society in laboriously proving the worthlessness of *The Cenci* for all practical stage purposes.[236]

Oxford University received *The Cenci* performance as evidence of the Shelley Society's degeneration, and the Oxford Union Society, led by Lord Robert Cecil, withdrew its patronage. Despite the unfavorable reaction in some quarters, however, the Shelley Society membership actually increased, because, of course, to see the controversial play one had to be a member.

[233]Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 813.

[234]*Shelley Society Notebook*, May 8, 1886, p. 59.

[235]*Shelley Society Notebook*, May 15, 1886, p. 65. About forty newspapers and journals reviewed the production, including *Le Figaro* and the *New York World*. For list of reviews, see ibid., p. 80.

[236]*Shelley Society Notebook*, May 8, 1886, p. 55.

Predictably, Furnivall was deeply involved in the storm over *The Cenci*.[237] A verbal battle raged between him and his opponents (though never as vicious as the Swinburne war), and the row ended only when the *Pall Mall Gazette* printed "Last Words About Dr. Furnivall" on May 18, 1886, containing a letter from Furnivall, and a letter to the *Gazette* critic whose article had started the correspondence. A note in "Last Words" from "A Constant Reader" refers the editor to one of Furnivall's past mistakes: when Furnivall reviewed Longman's new edition of Dr. Johnson's *Dictionary* in the *Reader*, he had mistaken Johnson's preface for a new one by Robert Gordon Latham and had complained that from it "Dr. Johnson had altogether disappeared." He had added, "We do not wish to kick a man when he is down, but we do beg Messrs. Longman to cancel this author's preface." The *Pall Mall Gazette* had then printed an article on January 18, 1867, entitled "Shocking Suicide of a Reviewer."[238]

Although *The Cenci* gave the Shelley Society a good deal of prominence, the next dramatic venture, a lavish production of Shelley's *Hellas*, complete with full orchestra and chorus, brought the Society serious financial problems.[239] In fact, this theatrical event (whose reception was, naturally, much quieter than the reception of *The Cenci*), started the society on a downward course from which it never recovered. Signs of trouble are found in the Shelley Society's committee report of 1887: "The performance [of *Hellas*] involved a considerable expense, much exceeding what had been contemplated by the Committee,[240] and the report of 1888 records that "a very troublesome deficit had resulted from the performance in 1886 of Shelley's *Hellas* recitation and music, and we were bound to economise in proportion in 1887."[241] On January 6, 1891, the society received the

[237]In reply to an unfavorable review in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, May 8, 1886, Furnivall described the anonymous critic as a liar and "base beast" no longer fit for the society of "honourable men and women." *Pall Mall Gazette*, May 10, 1886.

[238]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. lxxv and n.

[239]The musical composer was one Sellé, Buxton Forman's father-in-law, and the music was so bad as to be a musical fiasco.

[240]*Shelley Society Papers* (1887), Appendix, p. 10. Money was not spared on *The Cenci* production either. "The material part, the scenery and dresses, has been provided regardless of expense." *Saturday Review*, May 15, 1886.

[241]*Shelley Society Papers* (1888), p. 24. Thomas J. Wise (honorary secretary and auditor) helped deplete the society's funds by printing too many luxurious facsimiles of first editions.

following letter: "Lady Shelley encloses her subscription to the Shelley Society which she believed had come to an end as she had received no report of it for the last year."[242] In 1892 the Shelley Society was wound up, despite Furnivall's claim at the inaugural meeting in 1886 that ten years would be required to carry out the proposed work. In a long letter to Archibald Henderson, Shaw refers to this and other Furnivall societies:

> From 1883 to 1888 . . . I had quiet literary offnights at the New Shakspere Society under F. J. Furnival [*sic*], and breezy literary offnights at the Browning Society, to which I was elected by mistake. . . . The papers thought that the Browning Society was an assemblage of longhaired aesthetes: in truth it was a conventicle where pious ladies disputed about religion with Furnival, and Gonner and I . . . egged them on. When Furnival founded the Shelley Society I of course joined that; and we pulled off a great performance of the *Cenci* before we succumbed to our heavy printers' bills.[243]

Throughout the society's brief existence Furnivall and other members promoted the formation of branch societies throughout the country and abroad. Shelley reading clubs and branches were established in Birmingham, Hackney, Oxford, Cambridge, Reading, New York City, Auckland, New Zealand, and many other cities. In the *Manchester Guardian* of March 3, 1886, Furnivall writes to commend the newspaper for publishing a letter from T. C. Abbot, of Eastlegh, Bowdon, urging citizens of Manchester to join a branch Shelley Society to be started there.[244] He then proceeds to tell the *Guardian* readers how they should now regard Shelley: During his lifetime Shelley was abused because his poetry was too beautiful for his contemporaries to appreciate. "Now the tide of opinion is turning," and Manchester, "a pioneer in many matters social and political," must "add its force to the onward flow of the stream that is setting

Other reasons for the society's collapse are given by Rossetti in *Some Reminiscences of William Michael Rossetti*, 2:390–93.

[242]British Library, Ashley "B" MS 1615, 3:40.

[243]Laurence, ed., *George Bernard Shaw*, p. 487.

[244]*Manchester Guardian*, March 3, 1886. The Shelley Society at Newcastle-on-Tyne was formed on March 12, 1887, when it was decided that its aims and objects, like those of other branch societies, would be "identified with those of the Parent Society." At its second meeting, John Clarke, lecturer in modern literature at Durham University, gave a lecture on "Shelley's Standpoint, Life and Works."

towards reverence for Shelley's genius."[245] While Furnivall could be expected to align himself with Shelley's anti-establishment and political freethinking position, he was also part of the Victorian movement that was beginning to eulogize Shelley, in particular his lyrical qualities as a poet. Furnivall was in good company. The great editor Richard Garnett was writing about Shelley in the most superlative terms,[246] and Mathilde Blind (a member of the Shelley Society committee) saw Shelley as "the singer . . . whose everyday existence moved as well as his thoughts and words to the sound of celestial music."[247]

The concentration on Shelley's lyricism easily accommodated the idealistic Shelleyites; Shaw's reaction to a paper delivered to the Shelley Society by Edward Silsbee is reported in the society's *Publications* for June 8, 1887: "Mr. Bernard Shaw said the paper seemed to him a sort of act of worship, and he dreaded all criticism that had not a basis of reason. It seemed to him that Shelley does produce irrationally enthusiastical phenomena which Dante and Shakespeare do not." Once the ferreting nineteenth-century biographers went to work, however, Shelley was in trouble. Browning, for example, felt morally bound to decline the Shelley Society's invitation to be its first president because his own moral principles were so opposed to those by which Shelley had lived. He wrote to Furnivall on December 8, 1885: "For myself, I painfully contrast my notions of Shelley the *man* and Shelley, well, even the *poet*, with what they were sixty years ago, when I only had his works, for a certainty, and took his character on trust."[248]

The Shelley Society did not quite live up to the sanguine hopes of its founder, but it did much for Shelley biography, bibliography, and criticism and certainly gave wider currency to his works. William Butler Yeats, writing in 1933 of Shelley's influence on him, says: "When I was in my early twenties Shelley was much talked about. London had its important Shelley Society."[249] Some of Andrew Lang's

[245]*Shelley Society Notebook* (1888), p. 16.

[246]Richard Garnett, ed., *Poems, Selected from Percy Bysshe Shelley*, pp. xi–xii.

[247]Mathilde Blind, ed., *Selection from the Poems of P. B. Shelley*, p. xxxvii.

[248]Thurman L. Hood, ed., *Letters of Robert Browning*, pp. 242–43. Hood believes that Browning's quarrel with Swinburne over the New Shakspere Society affair was one of the reasons for his refusal of the presidency.

[249]William Butler Yeats, "Prometheus Unbound," *Spectator* 150 (March 17, 1933):366–67.

amusing *jeu d'esprit* in *Saturday Review* about the society's origin is worth quoting:

> "By Jove, I will: he was my father's friend!"
> Thus Dr. Furnivall, in choice blank verse,
> Replied when he was asked by Mr. Sweet
> (Sweet of the pointed and envenomed pen
> Wherewith he pricks the men who not [sic] elect
> him a Professor, as he ought to be) . . .
> "Why do not you, who start so many things,
> Societies for poets live and dead,
> Why do not you a new communion found—
> 'Shelley Society' might be the name—
> Where men might worry over Shelley's bones?"
> "By Jove, I will; he was my father's friend"
> Said Furnivall; and lo, the thing was done!
> Then the fresh victim to "inaugurate,"
> They called upon the Reverend Stopford Brooke
> Who, being well disposed to them, arose,
> And did address them in majestic phrase,
> "Forewords," as they are styled by Furnivall,
> By Jove, for Shelley was his father's friend
> A thoughtful and most temperate address
> Was Stopford Brooke's, who, as we learn with grief
> From the reporter of this merry fit,
> Knocked Mr. Matthew Arnold out of time.
> . . . . . .
> Then, to the joy of the assembled host,
> To them arose intrepid Furnivall
> (Young Mr. Shelley was his father's friend),
> And proved that Matthew is a Philistine! . . .[250]

The poem was published on March 13, 1886, a week after Brooke's inaugural address criticizing Arnold's views on Shelley. The reporter conveniently omitted Brooke's reference to Arnold as "the finest critic in England." Thomas J. Wise, whose hostility Furnivall seems to have been unaware of, was delighted to reprint this poem in a "private edition" without Lang's permission.[251] The reference to Furnivall

[250]Andrew Lang, *Saturday Review* 61 (March 13, 1886): 354.

[251]See *Academy* 29 (May, 1886): 309.

calling Arnold a Philistine was a mistake; in fact, Furnivall was referring to John Cordy Jeaffreson, who had attacked Shelley in his book *The Real Shelley: New View of the Poet's Life,* published in 1885. Of interest too is the reference to Henry Sweet's unsuccessful candidacy for the Merton Chair of English Language and Literature at Oxford, which produced the drawn-out, heated correspondence in the *Academy* during the spring of 1886.[252]

In 1881, the same year that Furnivall founded the Browning Society, he had also launched the Wyclif Society. Its function was to print John Wycliffe's important Latin manuscripts.[253] In 1865, Walter Waddington Shirley, canon of Christ Church, Oxford, had printed a catalogue of Wycliffe's works with the idea of establishing a society to publish them, but it was left to Furnivall to form the society. Of the sixty-five English works in the Shirley catalogue, T. Arnold published thirty-three. Six pieces were spurious, and the remaining twenty-six texts were edited by F. D. Matthew for the Early English Text Society in 1880. In the second report of the Wyclif Society's executive committee, issued in June, 1885, Furnivall, director of the society, writes in his usual vein:

> The Five-Hundredth Anniversary of the death of the great Englishman JOHN WYCLIF has come and gone; and among the tens of thousands of folk whose knowledge of the great Reformer was increast and freshened by the efforts of his honorers last year, there can have been none who was not glad that a WYCLIF SOCIETY existed, that a set of English and German students had banded together to rescue the Master's Works from their five centuries' neglect, and make the records of his mind and soul accessible to the scholar's gaze.[254]

The last meeting of the Wyclif Society was held in 1914, and the last book published under its *imprimatur* came out in 1922. Furnivall

[252]For evidence of Sweet's extraordinary behavior, see his letters to Napier, quoted in *Philological Essays*, ed. James L. Rosier, pp. 154–55.

[253]See *Academy* 29 (January, 1886): 75.

[254]*Wyclif Society Reports, 1885–1925*, p. 1. Furnivall also attempted to found a Lydgate and Occleve Society, but the response was poor, and he abandoned the idea. There are letters in the Furnivall Papers, King's College Library from persons expressing interest in the project; for example, A. W. Ward, Owen's College, Manchester, wrote to Furnivall on December 7, 1872, to ask whether the society had been started.

did not edit anything for the society, and since no list of members was ever issued, it is not possible to determine the extent of his involvement with the society. It is unlikely to have been close, because virtually all the texts were Latin ones. In 1979 the New Wyclif Society was founded by Lawrence W. Eldredge, of the University of Ottawa. He is the society's general editor.

The New Shakspere, Browning, and Shelley societies, devoting their energies and activities to spreading the appreciation and study of individual writers, were guilty in different ways of prejudice, precipitate judgment, and mistakes, not unlike those of other societies, such as the Wordsworth Society. That is not, however, to say that their contributions to Shakespeare, Browning, and Shelley studies were minor. The societies unquestionably did much to foster and increase interest in the respective writers[255] and left behind them not only a very substantial legacy of understanding appreciation but more tangibly a store of historical, biographical, and textual material that was of considerable value in furthering literary culture.

Before Furnivall formed his societies in the second half of the nineteenth century, the future of English literary scholarship was in the hands of book clubs like the Roxburghe and general publishing societies like the Surtees Society. The former were supplying books not for the general public but for their own exclusive memberships, and the latter were commercial to the extent that they did not even provide for scholarly communication among their members. Furnivall insisted on publishing scholarly papers that were regularly presented and discussed at society meetings; he struggled to supply as many people as he could with large numbers of inexpensive texts. In this way he and his fellow workers provided an indispensable agency for the fast and effective realization of the expanding aims of later-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century scholarship. Inspired by Furnivall's unflagging enthusiasm and his vigorous direction, small groups of volunteer workers, led by scholars of distinction and prominence, continued to make remarkable achievements in literary research and scholarship.

[255]For American reports of the societies and their branches, see, for example, *Poet-Lore* 3 (1891): 388, 389, 650.

CHAPTER 7

# Conclusion

BIOGRAPHICAL ENTRIES for Frederick James Furnivall usually read "Philologist, editor and founder of literary societies." First, however, Furnivall was a democrat and a humanitarian. His awareness of conditions in Victorian England heightened by his experiences as a Christian Socialist, his appreciation of language and literature sharpened by his contact with great Victorian minds, and his sense of mission intensified by his agnosticism, Furnivall set out to realize his vision of a far more just and noble society by revealing to his contemporaries the truth and example to be found in English literature. The "treasures of learning" that Furnivall wanted to make available for "all comers" were to be found not in mathematics and classics, the subjects he had read at Cambridge,[1] but in the details of England's social history as seen through the eyes of great English writers of the past.

His statement to Roman Dyboski that he "never cared a bit" for philology and that his chief purpose throughout his long, busy career was "to illustrate the social condition of the English people in the past" simply meant that he saw his early English studies as the discharge of a debt to past generations and a duty to his own and to future times—little-known, unpublished manuscripts contained within them life that once had a meaning, when men were "hale, hearty and democratic," and details of that life had to be made available so that

[1]See Furnivall's review of Thomas Hughes's *Memoir of Daniel Macmillan* in *Academy* 22 (August, 1882): 112.

living persons might have the benefits, whatever they might be, of what their forefathers had bequeathed to them in writing. His insistence that Englishmen could learn a great deal from what they regarded as the crude conditions of their ancestors is hammered home in a hundred prefaces and "Forewords."[2] It was a faith that Furnivall shared with William Morris, Ruskin, and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, in a time of advancing materialism, shaken creeds, and pernicious scientific and philosophical specters. It is also, of course, an excellent example of the Victorian optimism so well expressed by Frederic Harrison in "Words on the Nineteenth Century":

> We all feel a-tiptoe with hope and confidence. We *are* on the threshold of a great time, even if our time is not great itself. In science, in religion, in social organisation, we all know what great things are in the air. "We shall see it, but not now"—or rather our children and our children's children will see it. . . . It is not the age of money-bags and cant, soot, hubbub, and ugliness. It is the age of great expectation and unwearied striving after better things.[3]

Furnivall was more concerned about posterity than were most other Victorians; hence his fondness for supplying biographical sketches of famous Victorians and his insistence on recording information for "those who come after us." He never tired of describing the qualities of the great men he had known personally during his life, and the young Arthur Symons, who claimed that Furnivall's graphic anecdotes "quite set me up in current biography," was only one of many who benefited from Furnivall's acquaintance with distinguished Victorians.

Furnivall's desire to have records preserved for posterity during his own lifetime is seen again in his fondness for describing events from his youth and later years—how he heard Chopin play on July 26, 1848:

[2]Furnivall's preoccupation with social history is seen everywhere in his publications for the various societies. Possibly the best known and most valuable of his publications for the EETS was *Early English Meals and Manners*, with his introduction on "Education in Early England." His injunctions to others to follow his example are usually stern and magisterial, but sometimes they are more jovial: he dedicates his edition of *Child-Marriages, Divorces, and Ratifications . . . in the Diocese of Chester (1561-6)* to "The Antiquaries of Cheshire, in the hope that they will at once hang one of their number, to encourage the rest forthwith to print all the depositions and other valuable material in the diocesan registry at Chester which they have so long and so culpably left in MS. only."

[3]Frederic Harrison, "Words on the Nineteenth Century," in *The Choice of Books*, p. 425.

> A little thin man with high shoulders, very pale, light hair, bold nose; seems consumed with the fire within. Chief peculiarity in playing is the delicious murmur he brings out of the piano, sweeps over the keys like a breath, inconceivably rapid and light;[4]

and how he saw Wordsworth emerging from Macmillan's in Cambridge, where he had spread out an American newspaper before him and exclaimed in disgust, "All my poems, Mr. Macmillan—for threepence!"[5] Many of Furnivall's letters were edited by him for posterity.[6] He identifies persons mentioned and sometimes enlarges upon and explains references that might otherwise be obscure. Some of the comments he has written in the margins are typically candid. For instance, Henry Sweet wrote to Furnivall on September 5, 1887:

> You will perhaps be surprised to learn that I am now a married man. The lady is an old flame of mine—Mary Birch. The experiment—which to a superficial observer like yourself might seem a bold one—seems likely, as far as I can judge at present, to be successful.[7]

Furnivall has "edited" the letter, writing in the top margin: "We little thought of this when talking of the matter on Sunday. I recollect Miss B. as an unhealthy-looking plain woman 10 or 12 years ago. F."

Related to his desire to leave a record of the Victorian age to posterity was Furnivall's great concern for young people. They were, of course, an essential part of his Romantic belief in "the progress of man towards higher and nobler developments." He put factory girls and shop assistants on the river for their own sake but also for the sake of the future. And he constantly helped, encouraged, and tutored young students for the same reasons. On January 24, 1874, Furnivall wrote to the principal librarian of the British Museum:

> Mr. Walter Stuart Murray has been a member of the disciples of our Working Men's College for the last three years. He wants to illustrate a new work on armour & costume . . . and desires admission to the Museum, & leave to copy illustrations from the MSS for the purpose of this work. Though W. Murray

[4]Munro, *Frederick James Furnivall: A Personal Record*, p. xxiv.

[5]Ibid., p. 121.

[6]Quite a few letters were rewritten by Furnivall, presumably on account of their illegibility.

[7]Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 837.

is only in his 19th year, he is quite to be trusted, & will be most careful in his use of books and MSS. I hope that you will grant him leave to have a Reader's ticket, & to copy drawings.[8]

And Alois Brandl writes:

I have more than once heard him take in hand some ingenious novice, whose only incentives to editorial work were a love of poetry and Furnivall's example. In half an hour he would give him information enough to produce useful work; leaning against the catalogue desk in the Museum reading-room, or seated at an A.B.C. table, or even in the street, he would fix the necessary questions in the young man's mind.[9]

Furnivall's conferences in the reading room of the British Museum were sometimes a source of irritation to the historian James Hamilton Wylie, who writes:

Now I am one of those who cannot do with talking during study if it can be avoided, and an audible half-toned whisper is to me more irritating than a downright wide-mouthed speech. It chanced that from time to time I found myself sitting near to a venerable patriarch, whose white hairs seemed to give him all the privileges of a licensed *habitué*—while his eager friends would come up one by one and fill the air with the hum and buzz of muffled conversation.[10]

Wylie, however, got to know Furnivall and sometimes walked partway home with him after the reading room closed for the night:

And a queer sight we must have looked as we trudged along Gower Street and through the back streets that skirt the North-Western Railway to the bridge at Chalk Farm. With his passion for fresh air he would whip off his old black silk cap and stuff it into his jacket pocket, and on hot nights peel off his coat also and bowl along in his red shirt-sleeves. Of course all the world would nudge and stare, but I never remember to have heard a word of rudeness or annoyance flung at him, . . . though our difficulties became insuperable when we entered

[8]British Library, Add. MS 45747, fol. 140. In October, 1873, Furnivall lost his British Museum Reader's ticket, and a stormy correspondence with Winter Jones (principal librarian) ensued. See British Library, MS 45747, fols. 136–38.

[9]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. 13. The teashop, on the corner of New Oxford and Bloomsbury streets, was pulled down some years ago. Blanche Huckle, one of the tearoom waitresses, records in her tribute to Furnivall; "We still have two books that he gave us—one a copy of Tennyson's poems and the other a book called *A Golden Treasury of Songs and Lyrics*." Ibid., p. 76.

[10]Ibid., p. 200.

> the quieter streets, to be waylaid by throngs of children clamouring for their pennies from "Daddy."[11]

In Suffolk, where the rustics were less accustomed to his striking and eccentric figure, Furnivall once heard two country fellows discuss him: "Who's that Bill?" "Dunno, looks like the prophet Jeremiah."[12]

After Furnivall had discussed literary problems, outlined writing or publishing plans, and answered textual questions at the British Museum or at his eighteenth-century-style coffeehouse, the A.B.C. teashop, he would shower on his guests invitations to meetings, readings, lectures, and debates. A student might be invited to have tea with Furnivall at his home in St. George's Square, and before his departure he might be presented with some books. J. J. Jusserand, of Washington, D.C., visited Primrose Hill in May, 1878, a year before the *Dictionary* materials were moved to Murray's Scriptorium at Mill Hill. In the hallway was a large picture of the Canterbury pilgrims "plus 'A Would-be Pilgrim,' F. J. Furnivall."[13] After being led upstairs, Jusserand found Furnivall

> in a book-lined study, among a number of tables over-loaded with papers and pamphlets. The room looked very strange, as on account of soot and smuts, the tables were wrapped with grey linen covers, concealing books and all. When the lord of the place wanted to write, he pushed back the mounds of prints, and, using the tiny space thus made free for a time, wrote on any scrap of paper that was at hand.[14]

Caroline Spurgeon writes of hearing from Furnivall on "picture postcards of a varied and sometimes startling kind, on the backs of other people's letters, on half-sheets carefully torn from his vast correspondence, on Museum slips, and on the edge of newspaper cuttings."[15] Furnivall once explained to her that he learned the post-card habit in the early 1840s when paper was expensive; however, disregard for convention may well have been a more compelling

[11]Ibid., p. 201.

[12]Ibid.

[13]Karl Marx described Furnivall as "looking like a pilgrim on the way to the Holy Land to seek St. Anthony's beard." Yvonne Kapp, *Eleanor Marx*, 1:172n.

[14]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. 90.

[15]Ibid., p. 182.

reason, for Victorians did not regard postcards as a very respectable form of communication.[16]

In his early letters Furnivall's handwriting is beautifully formed. A letter to the Reverend Joseph Hunter of June 5, 1855, informing him of his reelection to the Council of the Philological Society, is in a copperplate hand. Over the years, however, his writing becomes more and more difficult to read. This deterioration was due no doubt to the volume of his correspondence and the haste with which he proceeded with his work. Letters written in 1910 are almost illegible, partly the result of his deteriorating physical condition, which Furnivall refers to in a letter to A. R. Waller, of Cambridge University Press, on June 6, 1910: ". . . had a bad day yesterday; and this morning fell with my left temple on the edge of my big oil-lamp and got a nasty cut. I am very tottery. All luck to you."[17]

On a picture postcard addressed to Roman Dyboski, who had come up from Oxford with some sixteenth-century songs, carols, and other poetical pieces for the EETS, Furnivall refers to a visit by an American Chaucerian scholar:

> Dear Sir, come to tea with me tomorrow, Thursday, at the A.B.C.—Aerated Bread Company's Shop, 66 New Oxford Street, first floor, at 4 o'clock. My clever and nice American friend, Dr. Edith Rickert, is coming at 4.30, and you can stay till 5. Truly Yours, F.J.F. F.2, 1906.[18]

Furnivall's lack of diplomacy and quick temper sometimes brought such literary friendships to an abrupt end. Ewald Flügel writes:

> He would often speak of his German friends, ten Brink, Zupitza, and Koelbing. Speaking of Elze, he told me with a smile and a sigh (but with more of a scornful smile than of a sigh!) how their friendship had ended. Elze had sent him a bunch of his Conjectures on Elizabethan dramatists, atrocious and incredible *jeux*—scarcely *d'esprit*; and "Furnivallos Furioso," with his Norman quickness of temper, wrote him on a postcard (by the by, did he ever write a letter?) that if he, Elze, were an Englishman and would dare to

[16]The postcard enjoyed its greatest popularity during the years 1900 to 1920. Furnivall also sent telegrams. For example, he "wired" a message to Henry Huth, Bolney, Sussex on September 14, 1869, about the Merlin MS. Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 424.

[17]British Library, Add. MS 43681, fol. 196.

[18]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. 38.

perpetrate such nonsense, he would hang him on the next lamp-post—a postcard to which no reply was received.[19]

There was in Furnivall a certain coarseness and lack of sensitivity which shows not only in his literary criticism but in his social and professional dealings with others. One stark example was his conduct after Browning's death. A photograph of the poet taken a few hours after he died was used as a frontispiece to William Revell's *Browning's Criticism of Life,* though Browning's son had refused to allow its publication by the Browning Society. Furnivall "to whose honour" Pen Browning "had entrusted" a copy of the photograph, had handed it over to Revell. Also, Robert Browning's sister, Sarianna, was shocked when Furnivall and others listened to a recording of the poet's voice on the first anniversary of his death; she referred to the incident as an "indecent seance."[20]

Furnivall's Socialist bias led him to prove that Browning's family was of humble extraction. The controversial *Robert Browning's Ancestors* (1890) is a typical product of the kind of genealogical research that Furnivall applied to Chaucer and Shakespeare and led him, after scrutinizing wills, court records, and lists of births, deaths, and marriages, to the two "exciting" conclusions that Browning's father was "half-Creole" and that the earliest known member of the family was a footman.[21] It is hardly surprising that Pen, living in grand style in the Palazzo Rezonico in Venice, was furious. Furnivall's reaction to Pen's outrage is a mixture of injured innocence and sheer devilry: "Young Browning is very savage with me for proving that he is descended from a footman, and has no right to the Arms that he flaunts on his gondoliers' blouses."[22]

The fearless, outspoken "Doctor" was a particular liability to those in authority. When the foundation stone of the new Working Men's College building in Crowndale Road was laid on July 16, 1904, with

[19]Ibid., pp. 206–207.

[20]See William S. Peterson, *Interrogating the Oracle*, pp. 29–30.

[21]Wilfred Partington's *Thomas J. Wise in the Original Cloth*, published in 1946, reopened the controversy about Furnivall's claim regarding "Browning's footman ancestor." In a correspondence in the *Times Literary Supplement*, Sir Vincent Baddeley, a distant cousin of the poet, takes issue with statements made by Partington. See *Times Literary Supplement*, February 21, 1948, p. 107; April 10, 1948, p. 205; April 17, 1948, p. 219.

[22]Quoted in Peterson, *Interrogating the Oracle*, p. 28.

some ceremony and state by H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, Furnivall was in the platform party. Although officials regarded his presence with trepidation, there was no possibility of excluding him since he was one of the founding members of the college. According to J. C. Castell and C. F. W. Mead, Furnivall

> enlivened the proceedings by handing round to the august councillors of St. Pancras, and other exalted personages present, his favourite summer sweet—a bag of acid drops (the Doctor, by the way, always carried a packet of bull's-eyes in the winter and acid drops in the summer, which he distributed to children and grown-ups alike)—and during a halt in the ceremony he was seen talking of his Sculling Club to the Prince and Princess, and handing them a copy of his annual report. He afterwards regretted that one of his lady members had not been near enough to admit of her being introduced to their Royal Highnesses.[23]

In this account Furnivall's all-embracing humanity shines forth.

Furnivall's "Prefaces" and "Forewords" have probably attracted more attention from critics than any other feature of his publications for his various societies. He greatly enjoyed writing the "Forewords" because, among other things, they allowed him to "have a chat" with his readers. These "chats" range over a great variety of topics, many of which are irrelevant, and in volume at any rate they tend to steal the text's thunder. As Caroline Spurgeon points out, Furnivall saw no reason to separate the details of his scholarship from events of his everyday life. "He would pour out . . . to any willing listener, whether they knew a word of Middle English or not, all the intricate details of the latest theory as to the authorship of *Piers Plowman*, or the last idea as to the date of Chaucer's *Troilus*." Following the same practice, he introduced to his learned "forewords" "anything that happened to be in his mind."[24]

In his vigorous, energetic way, Furnivall must tell his readers all, and, of course, digressions into sociological matters are frequent and lengthy. During a discussion of Captain Cox's lists of storybooks and old ballads in the "Forewords" to *Robert Laneham's Letter*, Furnivall

[23]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. 22.

[24]Ibid., pp. 186-87.

is carried away with admiration for Laneham's faithful pictures of Elizabethan times, and Captain Cox is lost sight of:

> I only wish that twenty others like him [Laneham] had left us such genuine pictures of the country life and sports of Elizabeth's time. As for writing so much about himself, I only wish my contemporaries would follow his example. . . . Let men *be themselves* in their writings, and let critics, and "unsuited-to-the-dignity-of-print," etcetera, be blowed!
>
> But where is CAPTAIN COX all this while? Well, we're coming to him soon.[25]

Characteristically, he wants to look at the past squarely and take the good with the bad. In his "Forewords" to *A Book of Precedence,* Furnivall writes, "Print it, I say, because, if our old people were dull, foolish, and dirty, as well as interesting, wise, noble, and pure, we want the dulness, folly, and dirt, as well as their interestingness, wisdom, nobleness, and purity." Furnivall then indulges in the kind of excess of which he was capable:

> . . . as irreverent friends in the [EET] Society have christened the first *Babees Book* my babee, I prefer to look on this present volume as my 2nd babee. Some may care to look at its eyes, some at its toes; some may perhaps penetrate to its navel, that continual marvel to the infantile mind; prigs, no doubt, will scorn it all as trash; but it may lead some back to knowledge of days nearer England's childhood than our time is; and if it does, I shall be content.

Furnivall adds a footnote on the subject of navels:

> I wonder whether Chaucerian and Tudor babies kept on asking their daddies "What's this for?" as they put their little fingers in the hole, and when scolded as naughty boys, answered with "Gog, gog!" and a grin.[26]

It is hardly surprising that Oxford and Cambridge would have nothing to do with him on account of his "odd prefaces."

That Furnivall was not a great writer, in the sense that implies art in composition, does nothing to excuse these "Forewords" and prefaces with their snatches of autobiography, slang, and swashing blows at opponents. His prose is frequently loose, disjointed, and cumbersome, and his scattered phonetic spelling only aggravates the

[25]Frederick James Furnivall, Forewords, *Robert Laneham's Letter*, p. xi.

[26]Frederick James Furnivall, Forewords, *A Book of Precedence*, pp. xxiii–xxiv.

situation. Moreover, his grammar is not always sound. His use of *like* as a conjunction led to an argument with Tennyson, who recalled that he had once corrected the prince consort in the queen's drawing room on the point. Furnivall declared, however, that he had found the usage in Shakespeare and "cited William Morris's emphatic utterances on the subject." Furnivall's letters, praised by Henry Bradshaw for their fluency, are better suited to his discursive, familiar, folksy prose, which, of course, reflects his dislike of formality and his determination to speak with his readers man to man.

His phonetic spelling has probably puzzled or antagonized more readers than has his rough prose style. During the 1860s and 1870s the whole question of "accepted spelling" was vigorously debated by many philologists, including Skeat, Bradley, Ellis, Murray, and Furnivall. In 1870, Danby Fry gave a paper entitled "On the Improvement of English Orthography," which is printed in the Philological Society *Transactions* for that year.[27] The following note is prefixed to his paper: "In dhe following pajés, dhe words ar spelt in conformity widh dhose chanjes which are suggested for *immediate* adoption. Furdher chanjes must await dhe result ov fuller discussion."[28]

In 1881 the society finally printed *Partial Corrections of English Spellings Approved by the Philological Society,* and in 1883 the American Philological Association recommended the adoption of the new list of spellings. Many of the society's members faithfully used the new spellings, but English usage generally remained unaffected. In 1901 the Simplified Spelling Society was founded in London, with Walter W. Skeat as its president; Furnivall was a vice-president of the society. A. W. Pollard describes one of the society's meetings:

> All his life, of course, Furnivall was a fighter, and I remember at an early meeting of the Simplified Spelling Society, only a couple of years ago, after I had advocated simplication on an historical basis, the uncompromising firmness with which he told me that the majority of the council were committed to a phonetic basis, and that if I didn't like it I had better go! Of course I didn't go.

[27]See *Philological Society Transactions*, 1870, pp.19ff.

[28]Ibid., p. 17. See *Philological Society Transactions*, 1880, pp. 73-74, Appendix ("Monthly Abstract of Proceedings"). The 1870 act, which introduced compulsory education, had given fresh encouragement to Isaac Pitman and his supporters, including Ellis, W. R. Evans, and Max Müller, professor of comparative philology in Oxford.

> The meetings of that council were far too amusing, and I remained as an unobstructive opposition, in which capacity I was tolerated because of my usefulness in forming a quorum. Thus one of my mental vignettes of the Doctor depicts him as he sat at the head of the table in the little committee-room at Great Russel Street.[29]

Typically, Furnivall continued to use phonetic spellings and other oddities of diction after most had reverted to conventional usage. His stubbornness in this particular matter was much more than an anti-establishment stance, though there is no doubt that he had in mind too the democratic purpose of simplifying orthography for the benefit of all comers. In 1886, the *Oxford Magazine* called Furnivall "the great original orthographist" and, referring to his name, asked, "Why two l's Orthographer Royal?"[30] His doggedness was also related to his preference for, or rather insistence upon, using common simple diction of Saxon origin. A "Teutonizer," or Saxonist, Furnivall was as determined to revert to folk speech, to dialectal words and words of Old English lineage, as he was to resuscitate old English folk customs and manners. Sometimes he even dotted his conversation with Middle English diction and pronunciation.[31]

Like the Oxford historian E. A. Freeman and the poet William Barnes, Furnivall challenged the dominance of the Latin and Romance elements in English—that is, the "civilized," sophisticated, abstract, and learned elements in the language. He was all for the folk speech of sturdy northern stock and, like Freeman, saw the Teutonic elements of the language as affording "expression mostly of greater strength than their romance synonyms for all purposes of general literature."[32] In his *History of the Norman Conquest,* Freeman devoted ninety pages to a demonstration that, regardless of the infusion of Romance words at the Conquest, English remains a Teutonic tongue, the philological proof of continuity. Despite his Norman-French origins, Furnivall was almost certainly influenced by Richard Chenevix Trench, his friend and colleague at the Philological Society. In *English*

[29]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. 150.

[30]*Oxford Magazine*, October 27, 1886, p. 307.

[31]See William Wimsatt and Cleanth Brooks, *Literary Criticism: A Short History*, pp. 351–52.

[32]See Austin Wright, *Victorian Literature 1961*, p. 188.

*Past and Present,* Trench considers English as it might have been if the Normans had not invaded and argues that, while intellectual and technical words derive from the classical languages, Anglo-Saxon might have developed a vocabulary itself—mainly by compounding, as German did. Williams Barnes, in the tradition of Trench, lamented the linguistic conquest of English and claimed that the old stock was still capable of compounding—for example, *sunprint* or *flameprint* for "photograph." He urged that current Latinisms should be replaced by diction out of "wordstores of the landfolk" and recommended such words as *craftly* for *technical, outclear* for *elucidate,* and *overyearn* for *commiserate.*

Barnes was publicly praised by Coventry Patmore, Edmund Gosse, Robert Bridges, and Thomas Hardy, and Gerard Manley Hopkins admired his poetry for its "West Country instress." In 1882, Hopkins wrote that Barnes's "speechcraft" (grammar) was "written in an unknown tongue, a soul of modern Anglo-Saxon beyond all that Furnivall in his wildest Forewords ever dreamed."[33] In reply to an invitation from Furnivall, Barnes wrote in January, 1863: "Yes, I will write you a paper on the Dorset or Southwestern English, with its Teutonic bearings. I want to give such a monograph to the world. . . . P.S. I might have joined your Society had I not had too many children to have spare guineas."[34] On April 10, 1863, Barnes wrote: "I thank you for your reading of my paper. . . . I put in the Queen's speech to show that whatever can be said in Latinized English, which the poor do not understand, could be said in plain English which they do understand."[35]

Furnivall's desire for "pure diction" was part of his longing for that "rude greatness" and "noble primitivism" of England's past that was best realized in the Middle Ages. Related to this ideal was a vigorous, aggressive, "muscular" patriotism of the "hearts of oak" kind.[36] Although he did a great deal of social visiting in London, Furnivall did not really belong in the Victorian drawing room. He was more like Kingsley, "a strong, daring, sporting wild man-of-the-woods" who

[33]Ibid., p. 189.

[34]Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 14.

[35]Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 16.

characteristically wished that he "could always go without trousers and boots."[37] He enjoyed that wildness and abandon that was associated with the "hale and hearty natural man" of olden days.

It was not unusual to see Furnivall wandering bareheaded along busy Oxford Street reading a book. Hating convention, he very rarely wore a dress suit—and did so only if compelled to. He liked to wear his corduroy trousers at the Working Men's College, and the tie of pink ribbon which he wore regularly became associated with him. To begin with, he found it difficult to knot the tie properly, but he soon solved that. "He first of all tied it to his liking, and then got his housekeeper to cut it at the back and stitch it together. 'Now,' he said triumphantly, 'all I've got to do is to pin it on.'"[38] Dollie Radford, whom Furnivall often took to theater matinees when she was a young girl, recalls:

> He took me once to a matinee—long ago too—and I suppose we must have forgotten to have an early enough lunch, or grown suddenly hungry in Bond Street, for down Bond Street I remember we walked, buns in our hands, and he, the day being hot, with his hat also in his hand, and his only coat over his arm. I was at school in those days, and this attitude to Bond Street made an immense and beneficial impression upon me.[39]

At other times, however, Furnivall's behavior could be embarrassing. In a list titled "Men I Have Known" (a list that includes Andrew Lang, Stopford Brooke, and James McNeill Whistler), the publisher J. M. Dent gives a well-meaning account of the Furnivall that he (and many others) knew:

> Another scholar . . . of many enthusiasms was Dr. Furnivall, a great servant of literature for which he laboured with perfect devotion, but a somewhat eccentric and disturbing character withal. He was most helpful in praise and suggestions for my undertakings. And it was always good to see his bright optimistic face. I remember last meeting him in Trafalgar Square walking along in shirt sleeves, carrying his coat on his arm; with sweat oozing out of his bald head he glowed like a harvest moon. He called out to me to have a strawberry, and handed me a bag of doubtful mush strawberries he had just

[36]See Walter E. Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830–1870*, p. 202.

[37]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. xxxiv.

[38]Ibid., p. 23.

[39]Ibid., p. 164.

bought of a costermonger. Yet at times he was certainly embarrassing. Cecil Clay had asked Dr. Furnivall and myself to go down to the opening of an institute which his firm had built for their work-people at Bungay. In the course of his address, Dr. Furnivall described his attempts with Kingsley and Maurice to get hold of the working-man and make him a scholar. He described in detail the filth the people lived in, the state of the stairs of the model lodging-house and the stench, etc., and compared it with the present day. And he began to inveigh against the way in which some people kept Sunday. He advised the workers not to be inveigled into church on a Sunday by a lot of mouldy parsons, but to go out on the river and the moors and take some exercise and get air into their lungs. He declared it was a waste of life to spend it in church listening to outworn doctrines. Now as the room was full of church parsons, it began to empty, and you could feel boiling indignation working up amongst the audience. It fell on me as the next speaker to throw oil on the troubled waters.[40]

Furnivall equated outspokenness and frankness with "manliness"; to him any concession to normal social graces when he was engaged in controversy would have been social humbug or an admission of weakness. The paradox of Furnivall's character—the generous, lovable, selfless man and the fierce, aggressive polemicist—disturbed his friends, and some tried in vain to curb his occasionally ferocious pen. On March 14, 1881, during the Swinburne row, Sir John Seeley, a member of the New Shakspere Society, wrote to Furnivall:

> You know very well you are an eccentric fellow. Now the difficulty with eccentricity always is that people who only read you without knowing you personally cannot understand it. *I* can enjoy your oddities of language because I know how characteristic they are, but it is very different with many members of the Society who perhaps never spoke to you.[41]

There was seldom any deep rancor or malice in Furnivall. He preferred rather to indulge himself in sheer provocation, in which there was nearly always a strong hint of humor—of the twinkling-eye form.

Furnivall had a vision, a humanitarian and democratic vision in which all men and women were equal, free, and enlightened. To that vision he was true in both his social and his professional life. For

[40]H. R. Dent, *The House of Dent, 1888-1938*, pp. 106-107.

[41]Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 13.

example, in his work on English social history and English literature he always went to the human side of it. He loved literature because he loved people, and the ruling idea of his life was to make literature human—to bring it out of the libraries and into everyday life, to make it essentially social. Thus, in a sense, his great achievement for English studies in the nineteenth century was a by-product of his patriotic dream of a new, enlightened society in England. Derek Brewer ended the Annual Chaucer Lecture to the Inaugural Congress of the New Chaucer Society in 1979 with the following tribute to Furnivall:

> His views may now appear old-fashioned, idealistic, limited. He tended to think of the best literature as a good-hearted imitation of life. He loved the good, enjoyed the comic, and though he recognized evil enough in life, and did more than most to fight against it, he did not value literature for its cynicism. He was a Victorian, and our times and attitudes are different. But all of us, as professional scholars of literature, may well take inspiration, for this New Chaucer Society, and for all our work, from Furnivall's confidence; from his sense of the interaction between life and literature; his admiration and love for literature; and from his noble work in sharing its life-enhancing values with other people.[42]

Furnivall was not a scholar in the strictest sense of the word, and he never claimed to be, though few did as much for scholarship in the Victorian period.[43] He displays a strong critical common sense in marginalia[44] and reports of society discussions, but as a literary critic he lacked imagination and insight, and his scholarship tended to be confined to the medieval and Elizabethan periods, as his gaffe about the preface to Dr. Johnson's *Dictionary* indicates. Even his knowledge of Early English was limited, and he had no specialist training beyond an ordinary classical education. Alois Brandl wrote: "Furnivall was not a philologist of thorough linguistic training; I should not even care to assert too positively that he could conjugate an Anglo-Saxon

[42]Derek Brewer, "Furnivall and the Old Chaucer Society," *Chaucer Newsletter* 1 (1979): 6.

[43]The Furnivall bibliography provided by H. Littlehales at the end of *An English Miscellany* lists 108 publications (pp. 481–89). See also J. F. Kirk, *Supplement to Allibone's Critical Dictionary of English Literature*, 1:640–41.

[44]See King's College Library, Furnivall Papers.

verb."[45] In his later days Furnivall described himself as a "worker," not a scholar. He was a literal, scientific student of English language and literature who hated subjective criticism. He saw himself, properly, as belonging to the school of hard facts, and he placed higher value on factual information than on critical theory and opinion.[46] Browning was quick to recognize this deficiency in his most ardent follower. When J. T. Nettleship once complained to the poet about the Browning Society's extravagant allegorical interpretations of his poems, Browning replied, "As for wishing to get behind any plain sense that might be discoverable, Furnivall, the founder, strikes me as going to the other extreme; disparaging anything but plain facts."[47]

Furnivall was at his best reading proofs, ferreting out facts, and collating information in manuscripts, biographies, and histories, though at times his impulsive haste led to careless mistakes of the sort Sir James Murray complained about. He was essentially a literary fact-finder, and, fortunately, he was shrewd enough to leave "the other deeper questions" to the "best heads in England."

If Furnivall was not scholarly himself, he did a great deal to inspire those who were. Eminent scholars like Henry Sweet, Sir James Murray, Henry Bradshaw, and Walter Skeat owe much more than is generally realized to the impulse generated by Furnivall's dynamic energy. He had a gift for seeing what had to be done and a rare ability for galvanizing people into action. It did not matter that the help for his societies was not always voluntary. Shaw was a victim of Furnivall's regimentation; after meeting Shaw (at the British Museum, most likely), Furnivall was soon advising him where to submit his novels for publication, assigning him some indexing work (never completed), and recruiting him as a member of the New Shakspere Society.[48]

[45]Munro, *Furnivall*, p. 10.

[46]Furnivall once told Caroline Spurgeon, "I have never been able to read your Plato that you are so fond of; I can't get along with him!" Ibid., p. 186.

[47]Thurman L. Hood, ed., *Letters of Robert Browning*, p. 303.

[48]D. H. Laurence, ed., *Bernard Shaw: Collected Letters, 1874-1897*. Shaw's assignment was to provide an index and glossary for the Hunterian Club's new edition of Thomas Lodge's works for a fee of five guineas. Shaw worked hard for several months, but when the assignment began to interfere with his Socialist commitments, he began to procrastinate. Early in 1885 he wrote to James B. Murdoch, secretary of the Hunterian Club, "I have written to Dr. Furnivall asking him to find some zealous worker who will attack the remainder of the enterprise." Ibid., p. 135. See also ibid., pp. 79-80.

While English studies remained in a state of virtual neglect in the older universities, Furnivall the scholar-adventurer was bustling about radiating enthusiasm, drumming up interest in language and literature, and prevailing upon hundreds of unpaid helpers to staff his various literary schemes, committees, and societies. His labors for the Philological Society, the most powerful agent for the development of nineteenth-century English scholarship, and his enormous contribution to the society's *New English Dictionary,* the most monumental scholarly undertaking in modern times, were only the beginning of a long career devoted to the systematic and organized study of English.[49] Behind all the subsequent activity to promote English studies was the guiding hand of Furnivall, and his influence in that respect is probably the most comprehensive in the history of English scholarship. Of course, today's sophisticated system of literary research, which produces countless articles, books, and microfilms on every conceivable aspect of language and literature, makes it difficult to grasp that in Furnivall's time English philological studies were in their infancy and that a mass of untouched material lay concealed in dusty manuscripts waiting to be edited. That was the situation, however, as Furnivall soon discovered when it became impossible to proceed with the *New English Dictionary.* The interest and enthusiasm that Furnivall's various societies generated in English studies and the valuable materials they provided for students and scholars to work on gave a strong impetus to the critical study of English language and literature. It is not too much to say that, taken together, his societies were the most powerful force in fostering English literary and linguistic scholarship in late Victorian England.

Tributes to Furnivall and his prodigious career are legion. They range from James Russell Lowell's commendation, "You have done for the English language what no man ever did or thought of doing,"[50] and the *Times* obituary, ". . . his [Furnivall's] work for the establish-

[49]The long list of journals, newspapers and periodicals to which Furnivall contributed articles, letters, reviews, etc., include *Academy, Athenaeum, Notes and Queries, Journal of Association, Politics for the People, Englische Studien, Archiv für das Studium der Neuern Sprachen, Working Men's College Magazine, Daily News, Pall Mall Gazette, Literary World* (Boston), and *Gentleman's Magazine.*

[50]Huntington Library, Furnivall Correspondence, MS FU 14, letter dated January 23, 1884.

ment and dissemination of sound knowledge of English literature is in no danger of being forgotten,"[51] to the dedication of ten Brink's *Geschichte der englischen Litteratur* to the "Doctor" and contributions from scholars in Germany, France, the United States, and Britain to *An English Miscellany* in honor of his seventy-fifth birthday.[52]

By 1910 the period in which English studies had been in the hands of "privateers" and "scholar-adventurers" like Furnivall was drawing to a close. A. C. Bradley's *Shakespearean Tragedy,* published in 1904, was being hailed as the most important volume of criticism since the time of Coleridge and Hazlitt, and Oxford "Greats," men like Oliver Elton and John Nicol, had entered the field. Things were stirring at last at Oxford and Cambridge. The Merton Professorship of English Literature was instituted at Oxford in 1904, and the King Edward VII Chair of English Literature at Cambridge was to be occupied by Arthur Verrall in 1911.[53] These developments were, of course, largely the result of the pressure brought to bear on the universities by the University Extension movement and the Workers' Educational Association.

The Board of Education report *The Teaching of English in England*, which appeared in 1921, makes clear how much progress had been made in the teaching of English since the start of the University Extension and Tutorial classes, and although the report offers few constructive proposals for future improvement, it does condemn the neglect of English studies in the past and the employment of outmoded methods of teaching the subject. It is interesting to find in this report, published more than sixty-five years after the founding of the London Working Men's College, distinct echoes of Christian Socialism. The committee believes that English studies would help tear down social barriers and suggests that such studies should be regarded as the

[51] *Times* (London) July 4, 1910, p. 12*c*. See also *Bookman* 41 (October, 1911): 42–43; C. C. Stopes and Alois Brandl, *Dr. Frederick James Furnivall*; *Nation* 91 (July, 1910): 28; 93 (December, 1911): 630; *Times Literary Supplement*, September 7, 1911, p. 323; *Annual Register*, n.s., 1910, pt. 2, p. 129.

[52] At that time a portrait of Furnivall was painted and presented to Trinity Hall; others went to University College and the London Working Men's College. *An English Miscellany* was published by the Delegates of the Clarendon Press in 1901.

[53] Furnivall was made an honorary doctor of literature of Oxford; an honorary fellow of his own college, Trinity Hall, Cambridge; and a original fellow of the British Academy.

central humane and cultural study for both formal and informal education:

> The rise of modern Universities has accredited an ambassador of poetry to every important capital of industrialism in the country. . . . He has obligations not merely to the students who come to him to read for a degree, but still more towards the teeming population outside the University walls, most of whom have not so much as "heard whether there be any Holy Ghost."[54]

Furnivall, with the help of his volunteer workers and "amateur" scholars like Alexander John Ellis (a mathematician), Richard Morris (a schoolmaster studying for ordination), Walter Skeat (a mathematician), and James Murray (a schoolmaster) had paved the way for this new era in English studies by organizing research in language and literature and laying the groundwork for modern literary scholarship.

[54]Board of Education, *The Teaching of English in England* (London, 1921), pp. 259–60. The initiative in proposing this report was taken by the English Association. Members of the report committee included Caroline Spurgeon, Arthur Quiller-Couch, and J. Dover Wilson (secretary).

## *Chronology*

| | |
|---|---|
| 1825 | Born February 4, Egham, Surrey. |
| 1831–41 | Schooldays at Englefield Green, Turnham Green, Hanwell. |
| 1841–42 | Studies at University College, London. |
| 1842–46 | Undergraduate, Trinity Hall, Cambridge. |
| 1846 | Commences law studies in chambers of Bellenden Ker. |
| 1847 | Joins London Philological Society. |
| 1848 | Begins social work with John Ludlow. |
| 1849 | Sets up as conveyancer, 11 New Square, London. |
| 1849–54 | Becomes Christian Socialist with Ludlow, F. D. Maurice, etc. |
| 1853 | Is appointed secretary of Philological Society with T. H. Key. |
| 1854 | London Working Men's College founded. |
| 1858(ca) | Becomes agnostic. Begins work on *New English Dictionary.* |
| 1861 | Is appointed acting editor of *New English Dictionary.* |
| 1862 | Publishes *Early English Poems*; marries Eleanor Dalziel. |
| 1864 | Founds Early English Text Society. |
| 1868 | Founds Ballad Society and Chaucer Society. |
| 1873 | Founds New Shakspere Society. |
| 1879 | Hands over *New English Dictionary* to James A. H. Murray. |
| 1881 | Founds Browning Society and Wyclif Society. |
| 1882 | Separates from wife. |
| 1886 | Founds Shelley Society. |
| 1896 | Founds Furnivall Sculling Club for Girls and Men. |
| 1910 | Dies, July 2, at 3 St. George's Square, Primrose Hill, London. |

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# Index


Aarsleff, Hans, 81, 85, 86
A. B. C. Teashop, 4, 5, 37–39, 194, 260, 260n, 261, 262
Abbot, Edwin, 134, 189
"Academy, The," 171, 175n, 189, 199, 202, 203, 230, 232, 233, 236, 242, 245, 254, 273n
"Advocate, The," 209
aesthetic criticism, 27, 175, 189, 190, 190n, 196, 197, 199, 203, 220
agnosticism, 62–65, 118, 140, 145, 146, 210, 257, 270
Alexander, William J., 231
Altick, Richard, 4, 9
American Browning Scholarship, 239n, 240, 242n
American Philological Society, 266
anti-Browningites, 243
anti-Puseyism, 13, 136
antiquarianism, 132, 138, 174, 175, 180, 181, 210n
anti-Shelleyism, 247
"Archaeologia," 183
Archer, William, 244
Arnold, Matthew, 26, 64, 128, 184, 242, 245, 248, 253, 254
Ashmole Collection, 158
Associationism
  (principle of co-operation), 17–19, 17n, 23, 26, 43, 47
"Athenaeum, The," 101, 129, 134, 171, 175n, 176, 200, 206, 213, 273n
Aufrecht, Theodor, 77
Author's Club, 87
Aveling, Edward, 246, 247
Baconian Society, 209, 209n
Baddeley, Sir Vincent, 263n
"Bagford Ballads," 158, 160, 162
Bagehot, Walter, 181
Baldwin, Prime Minister Stanley, 109
Ballad Society, 6, 53, 65, 103, 157–159, 160–162, 179, 181, 208
  origins, 27, 28, 112, 123n
Bannatyne Club, 126
Barnes, William, 267, 268
Barnett, Canon, 45
Barrett, Elizabeth, 236
Bateman, Virginia, 141, 142
Bathurst, Charles, 182, 192
Beale, Dorothea, 221n, 228, 233, 238
Bedford Institute, 68
Beerbohm, Max, 226n
Bellot, H. Hale, 74
Bending, Edwin, 237
Benson, E. F., 232
Berdoe, Edward, 221, 228, 229, 235, 236, 241
Berlin University, 240
Bevington, Merle Mowbray, 135, 136
Bickley, Francis, 28, 78
bibliomania, 71
Billingsgate Market, 200
biological evolutionism, 174, 175, 179, 180, 186, 191, 192, 195, 259, 268
Birrell, Augustine, 241
Blake, Norman F., 154
Blewith, Octavius, Esq., 212
Blind, Mathilde, 244, 245, 252
Board of Education, 39, 274, 275n
Bodleian Library, 158
Bonaparte, Louis, 175n

Bopp, Franz, 74
'Boswellism,' 193
Bosworth, Joseph, 21, 79, 121, 148
Bradley, Henry, 5, 112n, 134, 152, 266
Bradshaw, Henry, 29, 32, 132, 232, 266, 272
  character, 163n, 166, 167
  Chaucer Society, 163, 164, 165–169, 171, 173, 174n, 177
  London Philological Society, 119, 120
  New Shakspere Society, 182
  philologist, 164, 165
  works, 164
Brandl, Alois, 5, 76, 140n, 142, 150, 260
Brantlinger, Patrick, 47
Brentano, Lujo, 144
Brewer, Derek, 271
Bridges, Robert, 268
British Academy, 274n
British Empire Shakespeare Society, 212n
British Museum, 31, 37, 39, 66, 87, 96, 97, 107, 108n, 124, 129, 131, 141, 146, 151, 158, 163, 183, 194, 208, 219, 248, 259, 260, 261, 272
Brooke, Arthur, 210
Brooke, Rev. Stopford, 5, 244, 245, 253, 269
Brooks, Cleanth, 175
"Brothel—dyke," 201
  (see also: Furnivall)
"Brothelsbank Flunkivall," 204n
Broughton, Leslie N., 229
Brown, Maddox, 50
Browning, 6, 25, 29, 39, 66, 67, 69, 166
  American Study of, 227, 231, 232
  Browning Society, 207n, 221–223, 225, 227, 230, 231, 234, 237, 240, 242n, 243, 272
  character, 139, 221–227, 241
  death, 68, 229, 230, 239, 242, 263
  genealogy, 263, 263n
  hero worship, 193, 221, 222, 224, 225, 227, 232, 241, 242, 242n
  honours, 232n
  literary analysis of works, 209, 221, 222, 224, 225, 228, 229n, 232, 238, 240, 241, 255, 272
  New Shakspere Society, 202n
  popularity, 227, 241
  religion, 222, 223, 228, 236, 238
  Shelley Society, 246, 252
  social reform, 221, 236
  Swinburne row, 204–206
Browning, Elizabeth Barrett, 66
Browning, Pen, 68, 230, 235, 263
Browning, Sarianna, 263
Browningites, 223, 225, 232, 233n, 241
Browning Society, 6, 27, 31, 65
  activities, 227–237, 242
  criticism of, 223–226, 233, 242, 251, 255
  dissolution, 238, 239
  government, 222, 223
  membership, 221, 221n, 223, 226–228, 231, 237–239, 241, 244
  origins, 29, 41, 207n, 209, 212, 220, 221, 223–225, 254
  principles, 222, 223, 231, 238
  publications, 222, 226–229, 239, 240, 242, 243
  significance, 179, 229, 231, 232n, 239, 241–243, 255
"Browning Society Papers, The," 228
Browning Songs, 233, 237
Burchfield, Robert, 116
Burne-Jones, Sir Edward, 50
Buss, Miss Frances, 221n, 231, 233, 239
Butler, Samuel, 194
Byron, Lady Noel, 42

Cambridge Browning Society, 232
"Cambridge Review, The," 223
Cambridge Shelley Society, 251
Cambridge University Library, 163, 169
Cambridge University Press, 104, 262
Camden Society, 72, 73, 92n, 101, 126
Carlyle, Thomas, 6, 15, 26n, 42, 62, 75, 181, 192, 193, 221
Castell, J. C., 35, 69, 264
Cecil, Lord Robert, 249
Chambers, Sir Edmund, 215
Chambers, R. W., 77, 125, 134, 154
Chappel, William, 159, 160
Charterhouse School, 132
Chartist movement, 16
Chaucer, 5, 7, 39, 52, 67, 89, 113, 119, 124, 128, 131, 133, 134n, 138, 147n, 149n, 155, 159n, 168, 171, 174, 175, 179, 182, 193, 197, 198, 212, 213, 218n, 221, 223, 263–265
  chronology of works, 169, 170, 171n, 172–174, 175, 176, 177, 180, 199
  works, 29, 99, 162, 164, 165, 169, 170, 172, 173, 176–178, 180, 199
Chaucer Society, 6, 29, 54, 65, 66, 103, 123n, 149n, 157, 214, 220, 224
  dissolution, 36, 177, 177n
  financial status, 171
  government, 163
  membership, 163, 171
  origins, 27, 112, 123, 162, 163, 165
  publications, 162–171, 173, 174, 176–178, 198
  purpose, 162, 165
  significance, 162, 174, 176, 177, 178, 179
Cheltenham Ladies' College, 238
Chiarini, Cino, 5
Child, Francis James, 137, 139, 164n, 169–171, 176, 184
Christian Socialism, 16–20, 41, 42, 44–47, 57, 274
Church Missionary Society, 12, 13
Clarendon Press, 104, 114, 274n

Clarke, Mrs. Cowden, 196
Clarke, Charles Cowden, 14
Clarke, Helen, 239n
Clarke, John, 251n
Clasper, John, 12
Clay, Cecil, 270
Coleridge, Derwent, 90n
Coleridge, Herbert, 23, 24, 84–95, 97, 110, 274
Coleridge, Samuel, 18, 21, 47
College Shakespeare Readers, The, 67
(see also: Shakespeare Reading Society, The)
Collier, John Payne, 71, 123, 180
Collier scandal, 123, 180, 183
Collins, John Churton, 3, 4, 67, 219
Comparative philology, 74, 75, 80
Compton, Mrs. Edward, 141, 142
"Concise Dictionary", 97–101
Co-operative Associations, 48
Co-operative movement, 47
(see also: Co-operative Associations)
de Cardova, Radolpho, 249
corncake, 12
Corn Laws, 16
Corson, Hiram, 228, 232
Cory, William Johnson, 21, 21n
Craigie, Sir William A., 93, 109, 115, 116
Craik, Professor George, 121
Creasy, Professor, 11
Cunningham, Peter, 180
Currie, Jessie, 33

"Daily Chronicle," 107
"Daily News," 67, 107, 118, 273n
"Daily Telegraph," 249
Davies, Llewellyn, 43, 46
Davis, Norman, 125, 154
Dalziel, Eleanor Nickel, 24, 25, 29–31
Dalziel, W. A., 24
Darwin, Charles, 42n, 62, 175, 184, 245
Defries, Mrs., 239
Deimling, Hermann, 141
Delius, Nikolaus, 149n, 175n, 184, 192, 207
De Morgan, A., 11
Dent, J. M., 269, 270
"Derby Mercury," 181
Lord Devonshire, 207
Dialect Society, 82n
Dickens, Charles, 11, 31, 108, 209n
Dickinson, G. Lowes, 43, 47, 50
Disraeli, Benjamin, 32
District Visiting Society, 15n
Dobell, Bertram, 244, 245
Dowden, Edward, 5, 96, 101, 173, 175n, 184, 188, 190, 192, 202, 203, 245
Dowden, Mrs. Edward, 224, 225
"Dublin Daily Express," 173
"Dublin Morning Mail," 173
Duerksen, Roland, 246
Dumbarton, Sir William, 15n
Dyboski, Roman, 7, 124, 257, 262
Dyce, Alexander, 180

"Early English Literature Competition," 148, 149, 149n, 239n
Early English Printing Society, 128
Early English Text Society, 5, 6, 23, 26–28, 31, 53, 65, 66, 69, 103, 172
activities, 148, 149, 214, 239n
committee of management, 120, 125, 130, 131
correspondence, 153, 154
financial status, 130, 149, 150, 154
government, 120, 125–127
membership, 24, 125, 128–132, 154
origins, 25, 71, 73, 80, 101, 112, 117–122, 129, 135
publications, 99, 122–138, 140–156, 158n, 160, 168, 169, 177, 254, 258n, 262, 265
purpose, 117, 118, 121, 126, 129, 130, 132, 134, 144, 149
significance, 123, 148, 154, 155, 155n, 156, 157, 162, 177, 179, 190, 218, 220
Ebsworth, Rev. Joseph Woodfall, 127, 158, 160–162
Ecclesiastical Commissioners, 131
"Echo, The," 223, 243
"Edinburgh Review," 176
educational reform, 6, 7, 17, 20, 44, 54, 56–61, 64, 67–69, 148, 149, 218n, 239, 243, 255, 257, 266n, 273–275
Edwards, Passmore, 14
Eldredge, Lawrence W., 255
Elizabethan Society, 68
Ellesmere manuscript, 163, 171, 175
Ellis, Alexander John, 28, 79, 102, 118, 147, 164, 169, 174n, 184, 188, 266, 275
Ellis, F. S., 245n, 246
Ellis, Robinson, 78
Ellis, Sir Henry, 71
Elton, Oliver, 274
Elze, Karl, 207, 262
English Association, 39, 68, 69, 275n
English Association Bulletin, 69
"English Dialect Dictionary," 112n 124n
Etymological Committee, 88, 97n
evangelism, 9, 10, 13, 62, 64, 118, 140, 145, 238
Evans, W. R., 266n
Extension movement, 68
(see also: University extension programs)
(see also: University extension lectures)

Feuillerat, Albert, 39
Fiedler, Edward, 155
Fleay, Frederick, 186–190, 192, 209
Flugel, Ewald, 5, 262
Forman, H. Buxton, 244, 245
Foster, T. Gregory, 78, 218n
Francino, Girolamo, 145
Freeman, E. A., 136, 267
"Freemason's Journal," 173
Froude, J. A., 159, 159n
Fry, Charles, 233, 233n

Fry, Danby P., 119, 120, 266
Furness, Horace H., 184
Furnivall, Charles, 11
Furnivall, Edward, 11
Furnivall, Ena, 25
Furnivall, Fanny, 12n
Furnivall, Frederick James
agnostic, 22, 62–65, 118, 140, 145, 146, 195, 222, 223, 257, 270
antiquarian, 175, 175n, 181, 210n, 257, 264, 265
Author's Club, 87
Baconian Society, 209
Ballad Society, 6, 27, 53, 65, 103, 112, 157–162, 179, 181, 208
Berlin University, 240
Board of Education, 39
British Academy, 274n
British Empire Shakespeare Society, 212n
Browning Society, 6, 29, 41, 65, 212, 220–243, 251, 254, 263, 272
character, 4–7, 10, 14, 19, 20, 22, 25–29, 32–39, 43, 44, 46, 47, 49–52, 54, 56–64, 66, 69, 75, 78, 84, 87, 94, 99, 103, 104, 107, 109–112, 112n, 113, 114, 114n, 115, 117, 124–132, 136, 138, 140, 143, 147, 150–154, 157, 159, 160, 162, 165–169, 172–175, 179, 185, 189, 195–197, 201–205, 208, 216, 217, 219, 220, 222, 223, 228, 230, 231, 234, 235, 237, 238, 241, 243, 248n, 255, 257, 259–273
Chaucer Society, 6, 36, 65, 66, 103, 112, 162–178, 224, 226
Christian Socialist, 4–6, 14, 16, 19, 20, 23, 41, 42, 46, 47, 50, 57, 58, 75, 78, 257
Church Missionary Society, 12, 13
"Concise Dictionary," 97–101
death, 38, 39, 78, 111, 115, 134, 163, 170, 209, 217
Early English Text Society, 5, 6, 23, 25, 26, 31, 37, 53, 65, 66, 69, 73, 80, 99, 103, 112, 117, 118, 120–126, 128–136, 141–154, 156, 157, 164, 168, 172, 219, 258n, 265
education, 9, 10, 10n, 11–15, 42, 74–76, 78, 271
educational reform, 6, 7, 20, 28, 41, 42, 48, 51, 53, 54, 56, 58–61, 64, 67–69, 148, 149, 193, 218n, 243, 255, 257, 267, 270, 273–275
Elizabethan Society, 68
English Association, 39, 68, 69
English Dialect Society, 112, 112n
evangelist, 9, 12–14, 22, 28, 41, 62, 140
finances, 32
Furnivall Cycling Club, 57n
Furnivall Fund, 235
Furnivall Rowing Club, 10
Furnivall Sculling Club for Girls and Men, 33–36, 39 (see also: Hammersmith Sculling Club)
genealogist, 263, 263n
German Shakspere Society, 218
Gifford Street Foster Homes, 37
Hammersmith Sculling Club, 38, 127, 128 (see also: Furnivall Sculling Club for Girls and Men)
handwriting, 262
health, 262
hero worship, 140, 192–196, 242, 252
honours, 240, 273, 274, 274n
Hunterian Club, 72
Kruger telegram, 218
lexicographer, 86–89, 91, 93, 94, 96–104, 106–108, 110, 111, 115, 116
literary style, 159, 160, 164, 166–168, 170n, 197, 206, 209, 211, 215, 216, 223, 264–266, 270, 272
London Philological Society, 6, 20, 22–24, 48, 65, 69, 70, 73, 76, 78–80, 85–91, 93–113, 115, 116, 118–120
London Rowing Club, 216
London Shakespeare Commemoration League, 37
London Shakespeare League, 37, 39, 210n, 212
London Working Men's College, 5, 6, 14, 20, 23, 25, 28, 33, 34, 39, 41, 43–45, 47, 48, 52–61, 65–70, 90, 101, 127, 170, 192, 209, 212, 216, 263, 269
Lydgate and Occleve Society, 254n
Maurice Rowing Club, 216, 240
National Amateur Rowing Association, 217
National Rowing Association, 37
National Sunday League, 209
New English Dictionary, 5, 6, 22–24, 26, 28, 65, 70, 84, 86–103, 108n, 110, 117, 122, 132n, 215, 273
New Shakspere Society, 6, 27, 29, 31, 65, 66, 103, 112, 141, 142, 172, 179–181, 183–92, 194, 196–208, 210–218, 220, 224, 237n, 239
Orthographer Royal, 267
Oxford English Dictionary, 39, 85, 93, 109, 112, 113, 113n, 115, 116, 261
Oxford University Press, 39
philologist, 6, 7, 20, 21, 50–54, 69, 70, 73–77, 79, 80–84, 87, 89–91, 96, 110, 132n, 142, 143, 148, 151, 156, 212, 257, 266–268, 271–273
phonetic spelling, 266–268, 270
privateer, 4, 36, 274
Roxburghe Club, 71, 73, 118, 131, 152
Saxonist, 267, 268
sculling, 12, 28, 29, 33–35, 38, 55, 75, 113, 115, 134n, 140, 152, 153, 216, 217, 240, 259, 264
Shakespearean analyst, 174, 175, 179, 186, 188–192, 195–199, 202, 206, 209, 210

Shakespeare Reading Clubs, 67
Shelley Society, 6, 33, 65, 243–245, 245n, 247, 248, 250 250n, 251–254
social historian, 7, 11, 22, 23, 26, 52, 54, 70, 76, 80–82, 84, 117, 118, 121, 122, 124, 128, 129, 132, 136–138, 140n, 142–146, 151, 159, 170n, 171, 175, 179–181, 193, 197, 210, 210n, 221, 228, 257, 258, 259, 263–265, 267–269, 271
social reform, 4–7, 14–16, 20, 22–24, 26, 32, 33, 42, 46, 54, 56, 57, 69, 70, 118, 132, 137, 140, 169, 193, 204, 217, 236, 243, 252, 257–259, 263, 266, 267, 270, 271, 274, 275
sports, 11–13, 20, 25, 26, 28, 54, 55, 112, 216, 217, 270
Sunday Shakspere Society, 209
Swinburne row, 27, 60, 66, 172, 175, 179, 197–207, 215, 270
Whittington Club, 14
works, 25, 31, 57, 71, 79, 118, 121, 122, 128, 133, 135, 135n, 136–138, 141–144, 145, 146, 147, 152, 153, 156, 157, 159n, 160, 162, 163, 168, 170, 171, 173, 178, 179, 190n, 191, 204–206, 208, 211, 213–218, 220, 226, 227, 229n, 258n, 263–265, 273n
writing habits, 261, 262
Wyclif Society, 6, 254, 255
Furnivall, Dr. George Frederick, 9, 13, 14, 33, 41, 47
Furnivall, Henry, 11
Furnivall, Louisa, 12, 12n
Furnivall, Mary, 12n
Furnivall, Percy, 25, 30, 38, 144n
Furnivall, Selina, 12, 15
Furnivall, William, 11

Garnett, Richard, 21, 77, 79, 246, 252
Gaskell, Mrs. Elizabeth, 15, 53, 75, 142
Gaskell, Mr. William, 53
"Gentleman's Magazine," 120, 135, 137, 144, 199, 273n
German Shakespearean Scholarship, 183, 186, 192, 200, 209, 211, 218, 219
Gervinus, Georg, 181, 183, 191, 192, 220
Gifford Street Foster Homes, 37
Gilman, Arthur, 176
Girls' Sculling Club, 66
(see also: Furnivall Sculling Club for Girls and Men)
(see also: Hammersmith Sculling Club)
Girton-Browning Society, 231, 233
Gladstone, William E., 31, 32, 204, 209n, 212–214, 224, 225, 248
Glover, Ethel, 237
Goderich, Lord, 55
Godwin, William, 176, 177
Goldsmith's Hall, 93
Goldstucker, Professor Theodore, 77, 88, 90, 118, 121
Gollancz, Israel, 71, 125, 134, 154
Gonner, Edward, 235, 238
Gosse, Edmund, 201, 203n, 204, 205, 208, 268
Grahame, Kenneth, 184
Greenhill, James, 237n
Griffin, W. H., 229, 239
Grimm, Jacob, 74, 116, 155
Gross, John, 4
Grosart, Alexander, 207
Guest, Edwin, 21, 77, 79, 80, 92
Guildhall School of Music, 195

Haggard, H. Rider, 248
Archdeacon Hale, 143
Hales, J. W., 66, 137, 207
Hallam, George, 211
Hallam, Henry, 79
Halliday, F. E., 193, 209, 210
Halliwell-Phillipps, James O., 180, 192, 197, 203, 204–207, 209, 210
Hammersmith Sculling Club, 37, 38, 127, 128, 264
Hancher, Charles Michael, 225, 243
Hanwell, 9, 10
Hardy T. D., 152
Harraden, Beatrice, 5, 197
Harraden, Ethel, 237
Harris, M. Dormer, 144n
Harrison, J. F. C., 17n, 19, 44, 60, 144, 168, 169, 193, 194
Harrison, Frederic, 168, 169, 193, 194, 210, 258
Harrison, Rev. W. A., 246
Hartog, Cecile, 237
Haweis, Hugh, 15, 15n
Hazlitt, W. C., 32, 95, 96n, 101, 129, 153, 154, 158, 168
Hellenic Society, 128
Henderson, Archibald, 251
Herford, C. H., 229
hero worship, 140, 175, 176, 192–195, 210 221, 224, 226, 227, 232, 241, 251, 252
Herrig, Ludwig, 149n
Hickey, Emily, 212, 220, 221, 231, 235, 236, 239
Hill, Octavia, 44
Hodgen, Margaret, 17, 45
Hogg, Thomas Jefferson, 245
Holyoake, George J., 14, 64, 65
Honan, Park, 223, 227
Hope, Anthony, 5
Hopkins, Gerard Manley, 242, 268
Houghton, Walter, 36, 118, 193
Huckle, Blanche, 5, 260n
Hudson, Derek, 64
Hughes, Arthur, 50
Hughes, Tom, 17, 64, 175n
Hughes, Willie, 194

Hulbert, James Root, 87
Hunter, Rev. Joseph, 262
Hunterian Club, 72, 123n, 272n
Hutton, Richard Holt, 75
Huxley, T. H., 62, 63, 184
Hyder, C. K., 208

Ingram, J. E., 135n
Irvine, William, 223, 227
Sir Henry Irving, 195, 234n

Jeaffreson, John Cordy, 254
Jennings, H. R., 65, 66
Jeremiah, John, 198, 199
Johnson, Dr., 65, 82, 84–87, 96, 195, 271
Jones, Lloyd, 14, 43
Jones, Sir William, 74
Jones, Winter, 260n
Journal of Association, 273n
Journal of Education, 242
Jusserand, J. J., 5, 261

Kanda, Baron, 34n
Kapp, Yvonne, 141, 247
Kean, Edmund, 247
Kean, John, 247
Kemble, John Mitchell, 74, 79
Ker, Bellenden, 14, 42n, 75, 78
Ker, W. P., 3, 5
Key, T. H., 20, 21, 51, 74, 75, 77, 78, 80n, 90
King's College, London, 75, 100, 235
Kingsland, William G., 230, 235, 236, 238, 238n
Kingsley, Charles, 6, 16, 47, 50, 55, 75, 81, 118, 122, 131, 175n, 268–270
Kingsley, Fanny, 20
Kittredge, George Lyman, 4, 174n
Kluge, Friedrich, 155
Koch, Frederich, 34n, 155, 155n, 174n, 177
Kruger telegram, 218, 219

Laing, David, 121
Lambeth Library, 131
Lambeth Manuscript, 142
Lambeth Palace Library, 142, 143
Lang, Andrew, 252–254, 269
Latham, Robert, 77, 80n
Lecky, James, 241
Leconfield, Lord, 163
Lee, Sidney, 49, 188, 212n
Leighton, Sir Frederic, 221n
Leo, Heinrich, 207
Leon, Derrick, 43
Leopold, Prince, 185, 207, 208, 217
"Leopold Shakespeare," 31, 190n, 217, 218, 220
lexicography, 79, 82–85, 88–91, 93, 94, 96–104, 106, 107, 110, 111, 115, 116, 156
Liddell, Henry George, 82, 83
Litchfield, Richard B., 43, 56, 58, 61, 64
"Literary World, The," 190, 273n
Little, Stanley, 244
Littlehales, Henry, 144n, 174n
Littre, Maximilien, 116
Locker-Lampson, Frederick, 190n
"London Morning Post," 87
London Philological Society, 5, 6, 23, 27, 48, 69, 70, 112, 147, 148
  Concise Dictionary, 100
  members, 73, 77–79, 84, 88, 119, 120, 147, 188, 262, 266–268, 273
  New English Dictionary, 22, 23, 31, 65, 79, 81, 85n, 85–92, 94–96, 98–106, 107n, 108, 110, 132n, 134
  origins, 71, 73, 76, 77
  Oxford English Dictionary, 22, 79, 93, 113, 115, 116
  principles of, 77, 80
  publications, 65, 77–81, 85–102, 104–111, 113, 115, 116, 118–120, 147n, 169
London Rowing Club, 216
London Shakespeare League, 37, 39, 210n, 212
London Working Men's College, 5, 6, 14, 24, 25, 28, 33, 34, 38, 39, 70, 127, 170, 192, 194, 209, 216, 236, 259, 263, 264, 269, 274
  activities, 54–56, 58–61, 69
  curriculum, 47, 48, 50–54, 58, 61
  founders, 43, 59n
  government, 45, 58–62, 65
  members, 47, 50
  origin, 18, 20, 41–43, 48
  principles of, 4, 44–46, 56–58, 69
  social reform, 6
"London Working Men's College Journal," 52
"London Working Men's College Magazine," 57
London Working Men's Co-operative Association, 17
Long, George, 74, 75
Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth, 223
Lottner, Carl, 97n
Lowell, James Russell, 177, 235, 248, 273
Ludlow, John Malcolm, 16, 16n, 76
  character, 46
  Christian Socialist, 14–16, 18, 46, 47, 76, 78
  London Working Men's College, 27, 41, 43, 45, 55, 59n, 59–61, 127
Lumby, J. Rawson, 157
Lushington, Vernon, 54, 64, 175n
Lydgate and Occleve Society, 254n
Lyell, Sir Charles, 62
Lyte, Maxwell, 152

Macdonald, George, 121, 184
Macleod, Fiona, 229
Macmillan, Alexander, 103–105, 163, 175n, 259
Macready, William, 248
Madden, Sir Frederic, 25, 71, 80, 89, 96, 121, 124, 130, 131, 183
Maitland Club, 72n

Malden, Henry, 11, 51, 74, 75, 80n, 88
Malone, Edmond, 183, 186, 190
"Manchester Guardian," 251
Manchester Working Men's College, 53
Mansfield, Charles, 16, 19
Marks, Stacey, 50
Marsh, Hon. G. P., 91n
Martineau, Harriet, 14, 22, 42, 42n
Marx, Eleanor, 141, 142, 221n, 228, 231, 241, 246, 247
Marx, Karl, 141, 247
Masson, David, 148
Masterman, N. C., 14
Matthew, F. D., 135n, 254
Matthews, Albert, 108
Matzner, Eduard, 156
Maurice, John Frederick Denison, 6, 131
  character, 44, 58, 60, 64
  Christian Socialist, 16–18, 44, 45, 47, 204
  death, 65
  educational reform, 17, 18, 20, 44
  evangelism, 64
  London Working Men's College, 20, 27, 43–45, 48, 56–60, 64, 270
  philologist, 81
  social history, 122
  social reform, 16, 17
Maurice Rowing Club, 216, 240
Mayhew, Henry, 16n
Maynard, F. J., 245
Mead, C. F. W., 35, 69, 264
Medievalism, 22, 23, 26, 53, 71, 76, 117, 118, 121–123, 129, 132, 135, 136, 193, 194, 257, 265, 267–269
Meredith, George, 214, 215, 223, 237
Merton, Professor of English Literature, 254, 274
mesmerism, 42n
metrical tables, 187–189
metrical tests, 186–189, 190, 191, 192, 197–199, 209, 211, 212
Meyer, Paul, 175n, 207
Mill, John Stuart, 15, 19, 62, 64, 194
Millais, John, 49, 50
Miller, Thomas, 135
Minto, William, 172, 199
"Modern Language Reviews," 134
Morgan, Appleton, 190, 197
Morley, Henry, 148, 175n, 184, 207
Morley, John, 62
Morris, Richard, 79, 118, 119, 120, 122n, 125, 135, 142, 143, 148, 154, 164, 165, 184, 275
Morsbach, Lorenz, 155
Moulton, R. G., 68
Mudie's Lending Library, 100
Muller, Max, 105, 121, 130, 184, 266n
Munby, Arthur J., 45, 46, 64
Munro, John, 5, 10, 11, 16, 27, 38, 41, 42, 55, 57, 59–62, 110, 117, 134, 139, 140, 163, 195, 215, 218, 241
Murdock, James B., 272n
Murray, Alma, 248
Murray, Gilbert, 79, 162
Murray, John, 98, 99
Murray, Elisabeth, K. M., 30, 100, 103, 105, 109, 115, 141, 151, 158
Murray, Sir James, 28–30, 49, 272, 275
  character, 103, 111
  Early English Text Society, 135n, 141, 143, 154, 158, 184
  London Philological Society, 89, 92–94, 102–107, 108n, 109–113, 115, 116
  New English Dictionary, 23, 37, 86, 89, 92, 100, 102–107, 108n, 111, 261
  New Shakspere Society, 207
  Oxford English Dictionary, 93, 94, 109, 110, 112, 113, 115, 116
Murray, Wilfrid, 94, 112

"Nation, The," 223, 227
National Amateur Rowing Association, 69, 217
National Portrait Gallery, 84
National Rowing Association, 37
National Sunday League, 209
Neaves, Lord, 121
Nettleship, J. T., 229, 240, 272
Newell, Bob, 12
New Chaucer Society, 271
New English Dictionary, 5, 6, 22–25, 28, 31, 65, 70, 79, 117, 122, 132n, 134, 141, 273
  compilation, 84, 86–92, 94–97, 99–103, 106–112, 215
  cost, 98
  editorial committee, 90
  editors, 86, 90, 94, 96, 103–106, 110
  origins, 81–83, 85–88
  principles of, 82–84, 86, 91, 95, 98, 100, 108
  publication, 93, 97n, 97–99, 103–107, 109–111
  structure, 89, 90–92, 97
Newnham College Browning Society, 231, 232
New Shakspere Society, 6, 31, 65, 103
  activities, 186–189, 214, 237n
  committee, 184, 189
  dissolution, 179, 197, 207–209
  government, 184, 185, 198, 205–207, 213
  membership, 141, 142, 184, 185, 188, 189, 191, 192, 206, 207, 213, 270, 272
  metrical analysis, 186–190
  origins, 27, 29, 112, 179, 182–185
  principles of, 179–181, 185, 207, 214, 218n, 231
  publications, 141, 185, 186, 190n, 191, 192, 196, 208, 210, 213, 215–218, 239
  significance, 179, 191, 192, 210–212, 214, 217, 218, 220
  Swinburne row, 27, 66, 172, 175, 179, 197–206, 207n, 208, 220
New Wyclif Society, 255

"Newest Shakespeare Society," 198
(see also: New Shakspere Society)
Newest Shakespeare School, 201
Nicholson, Brinsley, 188
Nicol, John, 274
Nicolas, Sir Harris, 176
Niebuhr, Barthold, 83
North London Collegiate School for Girls, 239
Northrup, Clark S., 229
"Notes and Queries," 145, 154, 160, 162, 170, 241, 273n

"Old-Spelling Shakespeare," 31
Onions, C. T., 84, 85, 100n, 113n, 116, 125
Ormerod, Helen J., 229
Orr, Mrs., 229, 231, 238, 238n
Outram, Leonard, 234
Owenites, 14, 17, 17n, 47
Owen's College, Manchester, 185, 254n
Oxford Bible, 109
Oxford English Dictionary, 22, 39, 79, 85, 114, 158, 261
compilation, 92, 93, 112, 113
cost, 104, 105, 109
editors, 93, 109, 112, 116
origins, 87, 113
significance, 115, 116
structure, 109
Oxford, Lord, 115
"Oxford Magazine," 267
Oxford Movement, 13
Oxford Research Party, 109
Oxford Union Society, 249
Oxford University Press, 39, 102, 103, 105, 106, 109, 110

Padelford, Frederick M., 37, 38
Palaeographical Society, 123n
"Pall Mall Gazette, The," 170, 201, 244, 250, 273n
Parker Society, 72
Passow, Francis, 82, 83
Patmore, Coventry, 268
Paul, Cedar, 46, 47
Paul, Eden, 46, 47
Pearsall, Robert, 229
Pearson, C. H., 240
"People's Paper, The," 59
Percy, Bishop Thomas, 137, 138, 140, 158
Percy Folio, 137, 139, 140, 143, 157, 158
Percy Society, 72, 123, 176
Peterson, W. S., 237, 242, 243
Phelps, Samuel, 248
Phillipps, Sir Thomas, 31
phonetic spelling, 266–268, 270
"Pigsbrook," 201, 203, 204, 206, 208
Pitman, Isaac, 266n
Poel, William, 204n
Pollard, Alfred W., 5, 6, 107, 125, 141, 142, 176, 266
Potter, Professor Stephen, 123, 160
Preston, Sydney E., 244, 245n
Propert, P. S. G., 216, 217
Prothero, G. W., 165
Pulszky, F., 90
Puseyism, 13

"Quarterly Review," 176
Quiller-Couch, Arthur, 275n

Radford, Dollie, 269
Radford, George, 36, 65
Radford, E., 229
Ralli, Augustus, 196
Rask, Rasmus, 74
Rawlinson Collection, 158
"Reader," 250
Reading Shelley Society, 251
Revell, William, 263
Richardson, Charles, 82–87
Rickert, Edith, 262
Rochfort-Smith, Teena, 30, 31, 147
Roebuck, John, 51, 57, 67
Rolleston, T. W., 245
Rolls Series, 71, 152
Rosen, Friedrich, 74
Rosseth, William M., 91, 145, 174, 209n, 229, 245n, 245–247
Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, 47, 50
Round, P., 216
"Roxburghe Ballads," 158–160, 162
Roxburghe Club, 71, 72, 72n, 73, 92n, 118, 131, 152, 255
Royal Academy, 174, 175n, 221n
Ruskin, Effie, 48–50
Ruskin, John, 6, 47, 49, 52, 120, 242
on agnosticism, 63
character, 26, 49
Christian Socialist, 75
Early English Text Society, 120
London Working Men's College, 47, 48, 50
New Shakspere Society, 184, 193
social history, 26n 129n, 258
works, 15, 48, 51, 52
Ruskin Society, 225
Rye, Walter, 175n, 176n

Sagar, Mr., 232
Salesbury, William, 147
Salford Working Men's College, 56
Salt, Henry, 244, 245n
"Saturday Review, The," 135, 136, 138, 183, 211, 249, 253
"Savoy, The," 237
Saxonism, 267, 268
Schipper, Jakob, 156n
von Schlegel, August, 183, 197, 200
Schoenbaum, S., 113n
scientific criticism, 27, 138, 170, 174, 175,

179, 186–192, 195–202, 203, 210, 220, 272
"Scotsman, The," 249
Scott, Alexander, 14, 15, 15n
Scott, Robert, 82
Scottish Text Society, 126
sculling, 4, 12, 25, 28, 29, 33, 35, 38, 75, 115, 140, 152, 153, 216, 217, 259, 264
Seeley, Mary, 55
Seeley, Sir John Robert, 55, 132, 175n, 184, 270
"Shakespeareana," 208, 211
Shakespeare Reading Society, The, 67
Shakespeare Society, 72, 123, 126, 127, 182, 183, 192n
Sharp, William, 229
(see also: Fiona Macleod)
Shaw, George Bernard, 188n, 195, 228, 231, 238, 241, 244–246, 248, 251, 252, 272
Sheffield People's College, 43, 57
Shelley, Percy Bysshe, 15, 21, 33
biography, 252
criticism of, 252, 254
hero worship, 251, 252
literary analysis of work, 251, 252
works, 249–251
Shelley, Clara, 33
Lady Shelley, 248, 249, 251
Shelley, Mary, 33
Shelleyites, 246, 248, 252
Shelley Society, 6, 27, 65
activities, 247–250, 251
collapse of, 250, 251
criticism of, 246, 249
financial status, 250, 251
government of, 244
membership, 244, 247–249
origins, 33, 243, 244, 251, 251n, 253
principles, 243, 244
production of plays, 247–250
publications, 244, 245, 246, 247, 252
significance, 179, 251, 252, 255
"Shelley Society Notebook," 245n, 247
Schick, Josef, 218
Shore, Louisa, 194
Shorter, Thomas, 54
Simplified Spelling Society, 266, 267
Skeat, Walter, 28, 72n
character, 130
English Dialect Society, 112, 112n, 123, 124n
Early English Text Society, 121, 123, 125, 126, 133–135, 145, 153, 154, 163, 173, 174, 176–178, 184
London Philological Society, 79, 103–105, 110, 113
mathematician, 272, 275
New English Dictionary, 103–105
New Shakspere Society, 207
Oxford English Dictionary, 110, 113, 114
philologist, 5, 124, 266
works, 105, 112n, 123, 124
Skipsey, Joseph, 209n
Skipton Grammar School, 187
Slater, Walter, 235
Slater, Mrs. Walter, 31
Smiles, Samuel, 46
Smith, George, 49, 229–231
Smith, J. Challenor, Esq., 146
Smith, Lucy Toulmin, 29, 30, 144
Smith, Russell, 76
Snelgrove, Arthur G., 171
"Spectator, The," 200, 242
Spenser Society, 123n
Spielman, Marion Henry, 174n
social history, 7, 22, 23, 26, 52, 54, 70, 76, 80–84, 115, 117, 118, 121–123, 128–130, 132, 136–138, 142–146, 159, 175, 179, 181, 193, 210, 257, 258, 264, 265, 267, 268, 271
social reform, 4, 6, 7, 16–18, 23, 26, 32, 33, 45–47, 54, 56, 57, 64, 69, 70, 137, 140, 169, 193, 205, 217, 252, 257–259, 267, 270, 271, 275
Society for Promoting Working Men's Associations, The, 17n
Spencer, Herbert, 62, 184
Spearman, Lady, 42
Spedding, James, 182, 188, 190, 199, 207, 211
Spelling Reform Association, 187n
Spurgeon, Caroline, 5, 177, 221, 261, 264, 275n
Stanley, Arthur, 15n
Stanley, Sir Henry M., 246
"Star, The", 241
Stephen, Leslie, 181, 194, 195, 201, 207, 241
Stephens, George, 121
Stone, W. G., 237n
Stopes, Charlotte, 212
Stratford, 182, 209, 209n, 210
Stratmann, Dr. Franz, 133, 156
Stuart, James, 4
Stubbes, William, 131, 142
Sunday League, 54, 59
Sunday Shakspere Society, 34n, 209
"Supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary", 116
Surtees Society, 72, 255
Sweet, Henry, 79, 102, 103, 105, 124, 134, 153, 154, 184, 207, 243, 244, 253, 254, 259, 272
Swinburne, Algernon Charles, 27, 60, 66, 175, 204, 205, 208, 210, 211, 220, 225, 248
Swinburne and the New Shakspere Society, 172, 179, 190n, 197–202, 203
Symons, Arthur, 175, 228, 237, 238, 242, 258

Taylor, Harriet, 19
te Winkel, Lamerte Allard, 79
ten Brink, Bernhard, 149n, 156n, 173, 175n, 177, 184, 262, 274

Tennyson, Alfred Lord, 6, 21, 22, 23, 42, 51, 52, 69, 76, 117, 120, 135, 147n, 175n, 182, 183, 186, 190, 221–223, 230, 242, 248, 266
Thirwall, Bishop Connop, 13, 120
Thomas, W. J., 213
Thomson, James, 226, 228
Thorpe, Benjamin, 74, 76, 79
Tillotson, Kathleen, 160
"Times, The," 116, 273
Tolkein, John R. R., 154
Tooke, John Horne, 82
Trench, Richard Chenevix, Dean of Westminster, 52, 79, 81, 82, 84–88, 90, 91, 122, 135n, 175n, 267, 268
Trinity College, Dublin, 173, 214, 214n
Trollope, Anthony, 157
Twain, Mark, 242

Ulrici, Hermann, 184, 207
University College, Bristol, 215
University College, London, 10, 11, 63, 73–79, 148, 181, 214n, 223, 239, 244, 274n
University Extension lectures, 65
University Extension Movement, 46, 274
University Extension Programmes, 67
(see also: University Extension lectures)

De Vane, W. C., 229
Verrall, Arthur, 274
Vezin, Hermann, 248
Victorian pilgrimage, 210
Volunteer movement, 58
Von Ranke, Leopold, 83

Prince of Wales, 264
Waller, A. R., 262
Ward, A. W., 3
Ward, Maisie, 228
Waterhouse, G., 141
Watts, Thomas, 80, 87, 90
Wedgewood, Hensleigh, 21, 77, 79, 80, 80n, 88, 90, 93, 121
West, Elizabeth D., 224, 225
"West London Observer," 33
Westlake, John, 43
"Westminster Gazette," 107, 108, 239
"Westminster Review, The," 144, 202
Wetz, W., 7
Weymouth, Richard F., 119n
Wheatley, Henry Benjamin, 79, 120, 132, 134, 135, 141, 142, 147n, 154
Wheelwright, Rev. G., 100, 102, 103
Whistler, James McNeill, 269
White, Beatrice, 156
White, George H., 157
Whitehead, Miss Catherine, 235
Whiteing, Richard, 5
Whittington Club, 14
Wilde, Oscar, 242n, 248
Wilson, J. Dover, 275n
Wimsatt, William, 175
Wise, Thomas J., 227, 229, 239, 244, 248, 250n, 253
Wordsworth, William, 226, 230, 259
Wordsworth Society, 226, 255
Workers' Educational Association, 274
Working Men's Co-operative Associations, 17
"World, The," 244
Wright, Aldis, 71, 163, 201, 207
Wright, Earle, 163
Wright, Herbert George, 154
Wright, Thomas, 92, 150, 176, 180
Wulker, Richard, 155, 156
Wyclif Society, 6, 179, 254, 255
Wycliffe, John 147n, 254
Wylie, James Hamilton, 39, 195, 260

Yeats, William Butler, 252

Zupitza, Professor, 134, 140n, 154, 219, 240, 262

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